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THE
CHRISTIAN SEASONS.

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DEDICATION.

UNICÆ SORORI MEÆ

REQUIESCENTI

IN SINU DEI.

So this must go without thy guiding hand
And thine approving eye into the world
Which thou hast left ; and not one page of this
Is mark'd with thine own hand, as always wont,
Alas ! with me, nor thy dear voice hath told
What to retain, and what to cast aside.

Light of mine eyes, and art thou gone indeed ?
How many thousand days in our brief life,
Morn after morn, thy well or ill hath been
The well or ill to me, as if one life
Upon one stem sustain'd us both in one ;
That, sever'd from thee thus by sudden stroke,
I needs must droop awhile. Yet, O most dear !
Spirit most dear ! sure it is well with thee,
And therefore now should needs be well with me ;
And so it would be if my earthly self
Could but be buried with thee in the grave,
And so my better soul with thee bear part.

And henceforth it shall be so, if in me
This passionate resolve, fed with the dew
And rain of many tears, and with the breath
Of many prayers sustain'd, may, by God's grace,
Grow into something of enduring strength
And purpose, while the pains of like disease
As with the self-same nails hold to the Cross,
Sorrow's true home, whereby the Blessed One
Would bring us to Himself, and keep us there.

Dear partner of my every joy and care,
E'er since I knew what joy and care might be,
From earliest childhood, henceforth to the end
Such thoughts must travel, in the bosom pent,
Unshared by thy sweet converse, and the glow
Of souls by nature set in unison,
With mutual sympathies, that seem'd all one
In two, as veins that fed one twofold heart,
Doubling those joys by making them thine own,
And taking half the burden of those cares.

O part of my own soul, so long endear'd
That I remember not, from life's first dawn,
When I have loved thee not, with such a love
That ne'er knew less or more by change of time,
With such entire affection, yet withal
That on it Heaven approving seem'd to smile;
For never spot or cloud hath intervened
To dim that mirror where thine image lies,
That thou alone of all whom I have loved
Hast left no sting behind of self-reproach,
For lack of earnest love or fitful change.

Were I to think of thee as gone indeed,
As gone for ever, then my heart would break ;
But when I deem of thee as gone before,
A little while before, then hope revives,
And earnest longing to prepare and be
More like thyself, and reverential fear
Of Him in whose near Presence dwell the 'dead,
And that abiding-place which changes not.
Then oft it seems as thou wert with me still,
Behind the thinly interposing veil
Unseen awhile, yea near and nearer still
Thou art to me, and seemest, as by prayer
I hold communion with our mutual Lord,
Who heareth prayer ; in that assurance blest
With thee I am, and then am comforted ;
And haply from thy prayers are those sweet drops
That lighten my sad heart, for sure I am
Thy love hath not grown cold, thy love for me,
But rather doth intenser burn more near
The countenance of Him whose name is Love.

And now my thoughts which ever turn'd to thee
To bear each passing good or bosom grief,
Oh ! not cut off from thee shall be those thoughts,
But purified and hallow'd, while to Him
They turn the more, within whose bosom now
Thou findest full thy long-accustom'd rest ;
There would I turn the more, and finding Him
Find thee in Him restored—no longer lost—
Not lost, but more than found. Yet here awhile
I look for thee in vain, and see thee not ;

I know not what thou art, nor where thou art,
But that thou art with Him, in whom on earth
Thy life was hidden. This forbids to mourn
But for myself, that am so far away
From what I would and should be, yet am not.
Then what if Time shall measure to the end
The void he cannot lessen, yet that void
May yet be fill'd, be more than fill'd, with thee ;
If those sweet daily hours to thee I lent
Be henceforth given unto my God alone,
So might thy death be more than life to me.
For thou didst ever choose the better part,
Which is not ta'en away.

At midnight came
The Bridegroom's voice, whom none beheld so near ;
Sudden He came, nor found thee unprepared.
For thou wert ever wont to be as one
In readiness to hear thy Master's call,
While I was more like him in the cold grave,
And so came on my ear those sacred words,
" Mary sat still, till she the summons heard,
'The Master calleth thee !'—then rose and went:—
The Master, He is come, is come to raise
Thy brother from the dead." Oh, be it so !
And so may I again to thee be given,
Thy more than brother, ne'er again to part.

It was one wintry night, that night I pray'd
Some fiery trial, whatsoe'er it be,
Might burn out all the fibres of my sin.
I fear'd and pray'd, and fearing pray'd again,

Doubtful if I could bear the fiery test,
Knowing not whence perchance it might come
home.

Thy cheerful words were with me on that eve,
Sent to me, as was wont, in thy sweet love ;
But when I woke at morn I found thee gone ;
The day—the dark, dark day that I had fear'd
From infancy, had come—and thou wert not.

Oh, that my prayer might rise, and rising blend
With the strong, tearful cry by Cedron's brook,
Heard in that garden in the dead of night !

Oh, that the drops of sad Gethsemane
Might be on this my sorrow, that it be
Not all in vain, but I may wake to hear
That voice Divine, which calls to watch and pray
In fellowship of suffering, and which hears
That cry, " Father, Thy will, not Mine, be done !"

Sweet, tender flower that we had housed so
long,

And watch'd o'er thee with so many fears,—
So long, that I remember not the time
When I have watch'd thee not, and fearful oft
Have look'd for thy sake to each passing cloud,
And trembled, lest it should lay low thy head,
And all my life with thee, upon the ground.

Sweet, tender flower which we have watch'd so
long,

For forty summers—nay, I rather say
For forty winters, for the summer-time
Had always more of hope, and the warm bloom

Would then return and kindle thy soft cheek—
For forty years have I thus o'er thee watch'd,
With such unvaried trembling, that to me
My days of gladness have been those that brought
Tidings of thee ; and 'mid the joys of life,
With all its changes, chief hath been to me
The sunshine and the light which seem'd to fall
Between the clouds too wont to hang on thee,
And thy dear, tender life ;—so frail and weak,
As ever ready on the ground to fall
At each rude blast, but for our sakes awhile
Sustain'd, while Mercy set aside the blow.

Delicate flower, that I have loved so long
And watch'd, until my very life hath seem'd
A watching o'er thee ! yet upon one stem
We grew together, that the dew which fell
On one upon the other trickled down—
The ray that fell on one the other cheer'd ;
Or rather might I say, so hast thou been
Always one heart to me—one soul—one life—
That it hath rather been as when perchance
Nature two rising flowers or hanging fruit
Moulds into one—together, as by change
Of purpose she had made and form'd in one
What she design'd for two. So am I left
Half of myself, as one that long had lean'd
A feeble frame, and finds his stay withdrawn.

What though associate souls, new tender ties,
And children branch around me, not as thou
Link'd and inwreath'd with early memories,

For I have lived without them—never yet
Lived without thee till now, ne'er yet in aught
Of my remember'd life, though born before
A few short summers, and it may be yet
A few short summers to remain behind.

But all thy life to me, as back I trace,
Is gentle, sad reproof ; for as a child
Thou wert as one that knew no other wish
But to sit meekly at thy Saviour's feet,
While I was dazzled by the opening world,
And would have drawn thee thence, though even
then,

Soothed by thy love, so great and wonderful,
That gave whate'er it had, nor aught retain'd,
In self-denying meekness ; by thy love
Cheer'd as a healing spell and charm'd awhile
Of that self-hatred which should have been mine ;
For if thou lovest me, then God might love,
I fondly deem'd—yet sinful—in my sin.
Thus by the love and friendship of the good
We cheat ourselves of goodness—yet the while
That love was but the kindling light of truth
Which still reprov'd me,—for such meekness spoke
The Fount from which it flow'd ; yet such reproof
Was gentle as the morning wind that shakes
The sleep-pent flower, and bids his bosom ope
To kindly-falling dews ; and haply then
Thy prayers might have obtain'd that aid Divine
Which interposed and cross'd my path of sin.

Dearest, still ever didst thou seem at rest

In ceaseless suffering, as a vessel toss'd
That lay at anchor, while a hidden strength
Kept thee 'mid winds and waters at repose.
From very childhood thou wert always one
Sway'd not by the outer world ; array'd within
With that meek spirit which is prized of God ;
Serene in thoughtful kindness to the last,
For as we live we die ; that treasure hid
Which was thine early choice, was not despoil'd
By changing years nor by the hand of death.

And oh ! that He that made thy life to be
My light, may make thy death to be my health !
But Nature for awhile will come between
And cannot yet recall thee without tears,
And retrospective memories that wake
A thousand tender images, and fill
All things with grief, as filling all with thee.
Thy picture o'er me stood and look'd on me,—
I knew it, yet my eyes I dared not raise,
But hasten'd thence heart-stricken, nor e'en now
Can venture to behold the canvas cold
Which is, and yet which is not, thy dear self.

So wither'd was my heart, and dry, and cold,
That soon the frame that cased it would, methought
Have laid itself beside thee in the grave ;
But when at length I saw thy wonted haunts,
The seat where thou should'st be, but thou wert not
Then did the smitten Rock flow forth within,
Refresh my heart with tears, and wash with dew
Thy recollections, that the past might be

No more a wilderness of barren grief.

And now I start to find myself the same ;
I fear'd—and what I fear'd hath come to pass,
And yet I live—and am as I was wont,
Go in and out, and sleep, and rise from sleep.

No longer shall thy friends around thee share
In thy dear welcome, which made glad thy house,
And that meek calm of spirit which was thine.
No longer shalt thou hear the matin song
Of early birds, or well-remember'd tune
Of choral chant so sweet, and thoughts of Heaven
It brought around us ; but partaker made
Of that which is “far better,”—not to walk
With marble feet on pavement lit with stars,
Thresholds of heavenly palaces, but rest
Upon thy Saviour's bosom with thy God.
No longer labour with thy painful breath,
No longer tremble at the sounds of war
For those that unto thee were dearest held,
But rest in Sabbath of eternal peace.

Oh ! never to have loved or ne'er to part,
This were an earthly wish ; such love hath not
Its price on earth ; it is of heavenly growth ;
By pain made doubly dear, with closest ties
Inwreath'd with all our being round the heart :
And now by death, oh ! broken not in twain,
But sanctified by death, and cherish'd still,
And ever to be cherish'd and kept safe ;
Guarded from death, and all things else that harm,
By love that “never faileth,” for such love

In love of God is raised, is purified ;
And therefore made enduring yet in Heaven,
And to partake of His eternity.

Thus still I feel thee near, although so far,
Like the soft star that glimmers in my room :
So far, that I can never see thee more ;
So near, I in an hour may be with thee.

And changes o'er thee pass'd while still with us
Such changes as time brings upon us all :
From infancy to childhood, and each stage
Through summer and through autumn of our life
From blade to plant, from plant to bud and flower—
Changes on thy dear countenance and form,
And gradual changes on the mind within.
Yet through those changes was thy love unchanged
And thou wert still the same ; and therefore still,
Through whatsoe'er of change thy spirit knows,
Doubtless the same art thou and thy dear love.

We know not what we are, nor what thou art,
But thou dost know thyself, and know thy God.
We know not what we are, nor can we judge
Of any thing around us in our sin ;
Cheated by false, unreal semblances,
Things are beyond us, and we therefore mourn.
The stars to us appear to rise and set,
The sun to sink upon his Western bed,
As if he were not ; and to us he leaves
Nothing but night and darkness for awhile.
But 'tis not so with him ; he travels on
To other shining lands, knows nought of night

And darkness, which to us his dying leaves ;
For these terrestrial clogs impede our thoughts
His glorious flight to follow ;—what to us
Is West and gloomy darkness is to him
The Eastern morn which on his steps attends.

The changing seasons bring to thee no change,
For thou art safely housed by God Himself
From wintry winds and summer heats. Henceforth
Our Sacred Seasons know thee now no more,
As they still lead us on from stage to stage
Unto that City which shall know no change,
Lit by the Lamb whose Light is endless Love,—
Love, that doth “ cast out fear ”—fear, oft below
Companion of the seasons in their change,
Depressing thy meek spirit with the weight
Of its own lowliness, which often droop’d
Its head to earth, in very meekness bent ;
As if it loved the ground, nor heard the chant
Of heaven-inspirèd birds ; now lifted up
To gaze upon the face of endless Love,
With no obstructing cloud, it droops no more,
But lifts its voice in the eternal song.

The changing seasons bring to thee no change ;
Would that to me their changes, one by one,
Might ope new plants of healing at my feet,
New stars above my head, which light and fill
The stable firmament that knows no change,
Whereby yet Mercy may restore my soul.

And oh ! it is surpassing sweet to know,
In changes which mark all we love on earth,

That there is One on whom, yet more and more,
Our love may live, and feed on ; to whom we
May daily, hourly, and each minute turn ;
Who changes not. Oh ! these affections strong,
Which cling to those around us, make to be
As hands and feet that seek and feel for that
Which may sustain and never fail our love,
And be the immortal spirit's home and rest !
For Thou wilt be to us,—they are Thy words,—
For Thou wilt be to us as Mother, Thou
Sister and Brother. O most blessed words,
How do they sound in this my grief ! And thou,
Meek spirit, whose remembrance is so dear,
To Him, whose love alone can fail us not,
Upon the bosom of His boundless love
I leave thee and myself ; new every morn
His mercies, and in them I will rejoice.

EASTER,
M.D.CCC.LIV.

THE CHRISTIAN SEASONS.

Advent.

UPON a dim and clouded wintry morn
I watch'd a little bird that sat alone
Upon a leafless branch of an oak tree,
Lifting a sweet but solitary note ;
And then it look'd about, as if awhile
Expectant of an answer ; but full soon
Another sounded from a neighbouring wood,
Another and another ; then anew
He would the strain repeat, and wait again ;
Till many slender voices join'd the call
With something of sweet sadness, rather say
Sweetening the sadness of the coming on
Of winter with a cheering note of trust.

Thus they that fear the Lord in the dark day
Shall often one unto another speak
In voices sad and low, yet such withal
As shall bring comfort to the evil time,
And God shall bow His ear, and hear their sighs,
And write them in His book, and on the day
When He makes up His jewels, on that day

He shall remember them : they shall be His.

The song of birds—how oft it seems to meet
Our spirits in their sadness, and reprove !
Thus that low note came like a prophet's voice,
Predictive of clear skies and open days.
I know of nought in nature which more speaks
The tender mercies and the love of God,
Than do those feather'd strains. When we are sad,
And some bereavement or depressing weight
Hath prison'd us and darken'd all our day,
That voice, on air or bough, hath a strange charm,
Because it speaks of God, brings to the heart
Whispers from Him in this our fallen world,
Like Christ's own parable : He seems to say,
"Hear ye the birds, their little lives are brief,
And long their winters, yet they speak of One,
Who is their God and yours, and that He is
A God of consolation and of hope."

And now 'neath wintry leaves, which linger still,
The buds are hid of the new vernal year ;
And thus the Spirit and the Bride repeat,
"The Night is now far spent, the Day at hand,"
On each returning Advent, which anew
Breaks, ere the sun hath closed his annual course,
The year of Grace ere Nature's year hath pass'd.
E'en so the Evangelic morn itself,
That ushers in the kingdom, hath begun
The everlasting cycle of new years,
Ere yet the waning world hath reach'd its end.
Heaven's hallow'd morning hath commenced ere yet
Night muffles up the eye of this world's day,
Beginning ere the end, beginning that

Which knows no end ; for the eternal dawn
Is even now purpling the Eastern hills,
While Evening lingers in the vale below ;
And on the mountain heights the feet are seen
Shod with the silver tidings of the Morn.

Thus, too, before the going down of life,
May the meek Advent of the Son of Man,
The kindlings of His Grace—the morning star—
The preparations of a better life,
Cheer the sad setting of this worldly scene ;
On tearful retrospections of the past,
With other hopes which are not of the night,
Lighting the rainbow of a brighter day.

'Tis Advent ! and as men that half asleep
Hear the cock crow the watches of the night
Before the Day-star, and then turn again
Their weary sides and dream ; then hear anon
The larum of another watch gone by :
So hears the world that call which says, "He comes !"
And turns again to sleep. Oh, may we hear
As Peter heard that sound, nor hear in vain !

What shall it be, and when ? that one great Morn !
This is the age of Knowledge, can she tell
Nothing of that ? From bowels of the earth
In which she delves for jewels and for gold,—
From stars she climbs and walks, hath she brought
home

No glimpse, no ray to tell us of that Light ?

No ! it shall be as if men, who had known
Nought but a dungeon of enduring dark,
Were suddenly to see the summer sun
Rising in all its glory, on the hills,

Valleys, and streams, and men : like this shall burst
The Day of days. We know not how, nor when ;
But this we know, most soon, most suddenly :
So soon, 'tis said to be already come ;
So suddenly, that all shall be amazed :
For that its coming shall be like the net
Brought by a fowler on a moonlight night
Upon a feather'd flock in harvest-field. •

Wonderful are God's works we now behold,
The altitudes of mountains and their bulk,
Their broad magnificence, their climbing Heaven,
Clothed with the sun, while shadows on their side
Majestic move in wild sublimity,
Enlarging, yet subduing, hearts with awe.
Wonderful, too, the Sea with all his ways :
His solitary vastness never still, -
Whether it be on some tempestuous night,
Foaming on high against the angry rocks,
Or sleeping in the placid summer noon ;
With all his sounds and marvels of the deep,
Ennobling our imaginings, himself
The mirror of omnipotence amid
The little ways of artificial life.
And wonderful Night's star-illumined roof,
Hung with its silver lamps, like some vast shrine ;
The dark-blue waste on fire with pearl-white orbs,
Like jewels in the bottom of the deep—
An amphitheatre of living eyes,
With strange unearthly brightness looking on,
As gifted with serene intelligence.
Ranging in measured bounds of space and time,
Yet so exceeding vast, as if design'd
The eternal and the infinite to speak :
For in those fires, as in the Burning Bush,

We see and hear the Everlasting Name.
And wonderful the creatures of God's hand,
Surrounding us with their instinctive ways,
In greatness and in littleness, alike
Unfathomable both. And wonderful
Is man in all his mould of mind and frame;
The spirit with its fleshly garb inwreath'd,
So simple, yet so complicate in both,
Fashion'd a living temple without hands.
So wonderful is all we see of God,
Intricate paths of wisdom without end,
From less to less, from great to greater still.

Such things declare what wonders beyond all
The day of God's great wisdom will reveal;
How wonderful beyond all wonders then
Must be that day which is the day of God,
When all His wisdom and His Providence,
And all His attributes of great and good,
Shall fully be made known and manifest
To all the sons of God throughout all worlds:
That Day of Days that waiteth at the door.
It needs must be so, and the morning light
Suddenly breaking on a man born blind
Must be of such a feeble counterpart;
And therefore all man's speculative thoughts,
Of what it may or what it needs must be,
Are arrows shot forth in the dark. That flash
Lightning-like may expand the universe,
The landscape that hath no horizon's verge,
The day which hath no evening at its close,
Infinite space, and time too infinite,
And the before and after of all worlds;
Nay more—vast worlds which all about us lie,
Of which we know not now, and cannot know.

For of His wisdom now we see below
But glimpses in the dark, and by our sin
Made scant and profitless ; but then shall be
The wisdom of all wisdom fully known.

Then shall these frames be changed and glorified ;—
But what is glory ? whence the ideal gain'd ?
From glory of the world and things therein,
Or that which dwells within the glittering tower
Of gold upon the head. Or it may be
We think of glory as a blaze of light
Beyond all brightness, dazzling as the sun.
Yet there is glory in a dim obscure,
As sometimes in the silence of the night,
Or hornèd moon of an autumnal eve,
Sublimer than the effulgence of the day.
Then if the sun, with all this colour'd scene
He lights, be not sufficient for the theme
Of this great argument, then let us take
Midnight for our companion by the way,
The moon shall be our lamp, and let us blend
Our meditations with the awful stars.
But what are they ? No more than shining spots
Of silver in the dark. But then no doubt
Our faculties shall waken to perceive,
Or faculties be new vouchsafed withal
To enter in all wisdom, and to know
Our gain or loss !

Then with a dread surprise,
Joyful or sad, beyond all joy or grief,
With wing of lightning and a thunder tongue,
Shall come the Thought that meets the wakening soul ;
In that new sunshine, things that seem'd erewhile
Most solid shall be seen to melt and move,
Moulding themselves as clouds, and pass away.

For death is as the night that wraps in sleep,
Though dread in the magnificence of stars ;
But resurrection is as rising morn,
With keys that ope the palace of the sun.
For not of death, but Judgment, speaks the voice
Of Scripture, when the Sun of Righteousness,
In whom the spirits of the righteous sleep,
Shall unveil on the regions of the dead
His locks encircled with eternal Day.
Hence morning unto morning tells the tale
Of resurrection, oft as dawning light
Breaks, like a new creation of the world,
Which folds and puts away the Heavens that were.

Though great and little are alike with God,
Yet then His wisdom and omnipotence
In twofold form will overwhelm our thoughts,
In greatness and in littleness. In these
We trace them now with wonder and amaze,
Until we come to limits of our sense,
Branching into the Infinite and lost.
Alps and Atlantic Oceans, mountain heights,
The moving wastes of water, skies and suns,
The multitudinous array of night,
Down to the speckled shell, the wild sea-weed,
Or antler'd insect ranging on the leaf.

In greatness and in littleness, for thus
Where Revelation holds her mirror up
Kingdoms of grace respond to things we see :
In greatness, for it speaks of deathless death
In a consuming fire that goes not out,
For ever and for ever without end—
A gulf that has no bottom where they fall.
It speaks in words determinate and full
Of being fashion'd as the sons of God,

Made like the angels which can never die,
Of dwelling for eternity with God ;
And that the opening to this state shall be
The lifting of the curtain suddenly
To see this theatre of things that are,
With earthquakes usher'd in, and with the Heaven
Falling with earth together, like a house
With roof and walls tumbling in midst of flames,
And sun and stars of this great universe
Dropping like figs when shaken from the tree.
And this the language and the words of God
I thus interpret, that it shall be vast
As to transcend all present faculties,
As we shall then have given us power to know.
For now, when we would measure works of God,
They leave us soon behind without the means
To follow, hedged about with the Divine,
Encompass'd with a sea without a shore.
But then we shall be gifted with wing'd powers,
Able to traverse them to an extent
Of which we deem not now, and into which
These words, which are of God, would lead us on
As near as our weak thoughts have power to go.

Again—alike it is in littleness ;—

The vast and the sublime, if I may speak,
Do here extend as far as to the height,
And breadth, and length, thus go down to the deep ;
For in the written record given of God
'Tis interspersed throughout with words that speak
Of Judgment so minute, that it transcends
Our thought, and it may be our feeble faith,
As much as in the vastness of the signs,
The consequence and dread concomitance.—
Words daily spoken in a balance weigh'd,

Thoughts long since pass'd into the Judgment brought,
Each deed connected with vast recompense,
Each day that passes coming up again,
Each light companion as a witness seen,
Each trivial chance as some great providence,
Bread cast upon the waters found again,
A little one a thousand,—passing word,
And passing thought, the hour of prayer, the clock,
The cup but of cold water;—many thus
The statements which to follow up and trace
Were like to search out hues and arteries
Upon a creeping insect scarce discern'd,
To track the spider's labyrinthine web,
Or through its hidden ways and windings wild
The gnat, as far as human thought can go.
Yet then I doubt not that there is implied
In declarations such as these from God,
That He will ope a mirror in the mind,
Or with His hand the curtain thence remove,
Which now o'erhangs the same beneath the soul,
And, letting in a sunbeam from His throne,
Reveal all our true selves unto ourselves,
And to each other, e'en as known to God.

And this I doubt not,—that the written words
Are nearest to the truth, and that 'tis vain
For our conjectures and imaginings
To calculate on modes how it may be.

And on this theme the rather would I dwell,
For that I know full well that where my faith
Hath totter'd or hath fallen, it hath been
In failing to hold fast and realize
The greatness and the littleness of life,—
The greatness of the things that are to be,
The littleness of things from which they spring,—

The greatness and the littleness which are
In ways of God among which now we dwell ;
And the false estimate of both of these
Which in the heart the world instils, whene'er
It fills it, making little things appear
As great, and greatest things exceeding small,
Magnitudes without end thus dwindling down,
With a mote hiding some transcendent star.

For this our life seems great, while yet we live,
Because with it a soul is conversant
Which hath its own eternity within ;
And so unconsciously exalts the things
Of this small day and night with which it deals,
Casting on them, as they pass by to nought,
Its own intrinsic dignity ; and thus
Investing meanest objects of this life
Falls down and worships them—the name—the gold—
The farm—the merchandise—the high estate.
Because itself—in image made of God—
Its dread reality, its boundless power,
Its immortality it puts on them ;
Thus in them sees the shadow of itself,
The shadow of its God ; and therefore bows
And worships for a greatness not their own.

For whence the charm of glory, or of wealth ?
'Tis Heaven reflected in a watery drop,
Which men behold, enamour'd of the sight ;
And chaining down their faces to the ground
In that the image of the eternal place
Yearn for the substance, and with prone-bent brows
So turn their backs for ever on their God,
Beholding but reflections of His light.

Again ; when looking on the times gone by,
Of ten—or fifty—or an hundred years—

Short, dwindled down they seem, and dwarf'd in space,
As the same soul into the Eternal Year
Expands her wing, infinite as itself.

Hence is the greatness and the littleness
Of this our life; thus God Himself comes down
In lowliness to the small day and hour,
And accidents of our mortality,—
The Babe at Bethlehem and the Eternal Word.
And if "our life be hid with Christ in God,"
This daily life we live, yet as in God
It must be great, although in little things,
As shall be known in that the Day of Days.

Moreover, love itself makes all things great,
Exalting by itself whate'er it fills;
Such is parental, such is bridal love,
And such is love Divine; by its sweet touch
Making most precious what had else no worth,
Ennobling what was mean, and what was low
Uplifting, and refining what was gross.
For love holds keys of Heaven, and love of Hell,
Although she feeds awhile on little things.
Love is true wisdom; love commands the will—
The will which moves and moulds the human soul.
For He who treasures up the widow's mite,
Notes in His book the lightest boon of love,
As done unto Himself, and therefore great.
He knows our every care, our every want,
And numbers every hair upon the head,
Seeking of us such love as He bestows.

Hence was the Jew's offence that fell of old,
Who would not see his God in David's son,—
The Infant—the Cross-Bearer; mainly this,
He could not separate what Prophets' words
Had interwoven so and wrought in one,

The first and second Coming ; could not deem
Of littleness and greatness so combined,
As we count great and little ; because Love
Was absent, which alone adjusts the scale.

And therefore till this day not understood
The Lord hath with him left that parable,
To which there is no key but that of love :
“ How is it David in the Spirit calls
Him Lord, on the right hand of God enthroned
Till all things shall be placed beneath His feet ? ”

Yet further : this I deem must be the cause—
The greatness and the littleness of things
Which are to be reveal'd—that lowliness
On this our state as needful for all men
Is so inscribed in awful characters,
In characters of blood, the Blood of God.
Therefore 'tis the foundation and the crown
Of all in man accepted on that Day.
For that he then shall know his littleness
Amidst the boundless universe of God,
Creations on creations then disclosed,
His place in the vast family of God,
So small, yet not a wish to go beyond ;
And it may be his littleness e'en now
'Mid unseen beings which environ him,
And of which all unconscious he lifts up
His bold front unto Heaven, of that great truth
Unmindful, what his fall hath been from God.

And then too of his greatness man shall know,
Which shall o'erwhelm him with all lowliness
And self-abasement, as of one new-made
In God's own image, risen from the grave ;
The greatness of the Love that came from Heaven
To put on fleshly ills ; of which e'en now

We hear and read, yet cannot understand.
 So much the ways of God transcend our thought,
 Knowing we are as those who know them not,
 Save in faint glimmerings which through our flesh
 His Spirit to our spirit may disclose.
 That Love which came from God's own secret place,
 And with our inmost selves makes itself one
 In fellowship divine and brotherhood,
 Union of heart with our heart, friend with friend,
 Brother with brother, and about our path
 Sharing our cares and wants,—those things which
 now

We read and hear and speak of, yet the while
 In reading, hearing, speaking, are as those
 Who know not—cannot know—as needs must be
 When thus the earthly speaks of the Divine.
 But then that greatness of ourselves reveal'd
 Throughout the things of earth and times gone by,
 E'en in exalting shall make doubly low,
 As an unwonted greatness when made known
 Depresses with the weight, by contrast felt,
 And conscious knowledge of unworthiness.

But these are speculations blind and weak
 Of such things as we know there are to be,
 How they then *may* or *must* be; for although
 While the world fails, from the eternal place
 Light may break in through this our earthly house
 As it gives way, but through the mouldering chinks
 Athwart, askance the radiance falls, and makes
 Fantastic shadows in the dubious dark,
 That we mistake their semblance. Yet withal
 Not altogether profitless to dwell
 On such anticipations God hath given,
 And interwoven now with our frail life,

Lights that with His own written Word conspire
To teach us wisdom.

I remember well
When I was sitting by the door of death,
Where fever left me, having drunk my strength;
By the fireside I sat, while one most dear
Read some light passing story, as perchance
Might soothe the o'er-wrought spirit. 'Twas a tale
That spoke of childhood and of boyish time.
But in me there appear'd to wake anew
The spirit of my early childish years,—
Associate with the things of which it spake,—
With such unwonted tenderness, that all
My soul seem'd that again of a small child;
With recollections which around me came;—
A long lost mother and a world of things
Arose, with all their own remember'd scenes;—
That it became an hour which ever since
Hath been like some clear spring, which hidden long
In marshy under-ways or verdant mead,
Steals forth again into some cradling rock
O'ergrown with moss and ivy and wild flowers,
Crystal-like pure, and with a trickling sound
Forth issues as a fountain-head renew'd.
E'en so that hour of reminiscence old
Came welling forth afresh, and still remains,
Amid the garden of my life gone by,
A fountain full of tears,—and yet of tears
With love so mingled that it seems to pour
A freshness upon feelings worn and dry,
To which still Memory turns. For 'twas an hour
That cannot pass away; an hour that woke
From childhood, childhood's hour in after days.
Now this, methought, might lead one to divine

How our past life might wake beyond the grave,
 With strange, still voice, or picture-like return.
 It may be suddenly that Memory's self,
 With some new powers of Resurrection born,
 Or as a cloud removed this fleshly veil,
 Like a fresh sheet of light that passes not,
 May clothe our spirits, glassing them about
 With an investing flame.

Then may be seen
 That weaknesses which wrap us now around,
 Of time, of circumstance, of sense, of change,
 Yea intellect itself, with all its powers,
 Were accidents of being for awhile,
 But not its essence ;—things that needed were
 For our probation, and put on by us,
 The short-lived vestments of mortality,
 As human things were by our Lord Himself—
 Necessities of our small finite state
 And nature, bound to time and place and thought,
 Our imperfections ; yet howe'er it be,
 This, only this, I know that all the while
 I am as one that sitteth at the door
 Till I be beckon'd to come in, and pass
 Into that great unknown eternity,
 Which like the air compasses us all around ;
 And for that change of being daily wait.

Yet 'tis required that we should feed thereon,
 And for our meditation much is given,
 Great though our ignorance ; for in this blank,
 This absence as of some mysterious sense
 Of which we know not, there are letters given
 And syllables which, like blind children, we
 May place together, and their language learn.
 Nay colours too, and outlines which afford

A picture, faint indeed, yet true and sure,
Which apprehended will approach as near
To those realities which follow death
As our frail thoughts and senses can attain :
And nearest then we shall attain when most
We shall adhere unto these symbols given ;
Though these expressions in themselves may be
Perchance but signs and shadows :—of a Day,
A Judgment-seat, and One that sits thereon,
Enthronèd visibly before all worlds,—
I doubt not that these words, though human words
And ta'en from human things, yet to us paint
That dread epiphany which is to be,
In circumstance exact and tangible
As our imaginings can ever reach,
While we are darken'd with this veil of death.
We see One 'neath a rainbow emerald-like
Sitting upon a throne, for ever Man
E'en as for ever God. Yea even more,
He that in Spirit saw, in Spirit wrote,
Hath thus pourtray'd,—“ I saw a great white throne
And Him that sat thereon, and from His face
The earth and heaven took wings and fled away,
And were not ; small and great I saw the Dead
Stand before God ; the books were open laid.”
Now though of books I deem not such as men
And pen and ink have written, but thereby
Suppose some wondrous record of the past
Which would appal me, mirror-like in truth ;
Some strange unfolding of the secret soul
As of a sealèd volume, in whose folds
Are written the intentions of the past
Which clothed themselves in deed—in word—in
thought,—

And it may be the unhousing from this flesh
 Is breaking of that seal,—yet those plain words,
 Of the “white throne and Him that sits thereon,”
 No doubt approach the dread reality
 More near than other language could express.
 Therefore I read them, and I read again,
 And kneel and tremble, and in trembling pray,
 And then am comforted. And sweet it is
 From earthly hopes withdrawn to lose oneself
 In the mysterious awfulness of God,
 In whom our life lies treasured, while He works
 The power of resurrection in the soul ;
 And then Himself would soul and body mould
 Like His own glorious Body free from death,
 When this vile body from her winding-sheet
 All ‘re-invested with white innocence’
 Shall stand before Him.

If intentions now

Write on the soul their unseen characters,
 Which the bright fire that on the Judge attends
 Shall then make legible, it needs must be
 Our highest work to strive to read them now
 By that same fire,—a fire which burns within
 His Spirit and His Word ; with these to pray,
 For these, in these, and learn that fire of Love,
 For love is lumination, and from prayer
 Is the life-breath of love, the air of Heaven.

But speculations of philosophy,
 Yea of diviner learning, it may be,
 Do lead us further from the truth of God
 In this which sets at nought all human thoughts,—
 As whether that Great Day might be indeed
 A thousand years, according as ’tis said,
 “A thousand years with Him are but a day ;”

Or whether all the past that then is weigh'd
Be but the habits of the soul, which then
Crystallized and transparent come to view.
Such curious questionings may lead abroad,
While the meek penitent on bended knees,
With saintly Andrews, on the words of God
Who trembles, reads, and prays, and praying weeps,—
Nay, in yon rural cot by sylvan slope
The sick man who hath read, or heard the words
He cannot read, and o'er them night and day
Prays—doubtless he draws nearer to the light
Which Angels have and Saints that are with God,
Than learning can attain to, or the search
Of keenest intellect which yearns to know
Rather than do the will. Thence it may be
Learned discourse and wisdom of the schools,
With all its boasted eloquence, is weak
To plant the light within that it may burn,
Yea, weaker than the unletter'd preacher's voice
Beside the village tree. As instincts lead
The fowls of heaven to their appointed food,
Insects and creeping things, beyond what art
And reasoning man could teach them, Love Divine
Knows its own way to its eternal good,
Beyond the language and the art of man;
For they are "children of the light," the light
That lighteth every man, no learned lamp
Leads them, but humble love in duty wise.

But now—if of that greatness when reveal'd,
The First-born from the Dead upon His throne
Of glory, we can never deem aright,
So far transcending all our faculties,—
Whene'er the intellect would aught attain,
And reach to heights which are beyond all height,

And fathom depths which are beyond all depth ;—
 But if to know ourselves, and know our God,
 To know the truth is to make low ourselves,
 To littleness—to very nothingness ;
 Then in this self-abjection may the soul
 Something bring home of truth in sinking down,
 As he that does the will the doctrine knows.
 Therefore I ween it is that thus our God
 Both Advents hath united in our thought,
 For preparation and for discipline,
 The King of Glory and the King of Woe,
 The Everlasting God—the Infant Child,—
 Our contemplations moulding on the First,
 That we may meet the Second. It is writ,
 “ I by the ear have heard of Thee, but lo !
 Now mine eye seeth Thee, and at the sight
 I do abhor myself, and speechless made
 Repent in dust and ashes to the ground.”

To climb the ladder of discover'd stars,
 Of suns on suns, systems on systems piled,
 Will bring not to the Holy Place of God ;
 But to descend into a lowly heart
 Made contrite, self-abased, and mourning sin,
 Will find the secret place wherein God dwells,
 And give to see in Christ the Incarnate Son.
 'Tis going down to the dark caves of earth
 That brings unto our view the starry Heavens,
 Else hidden by the glare of the rude Day ;
 And 'tis before the Infant bowing low,
 And offering up ourselves and all we have,
 Kings are we made and Priests, meet to attend
 The Coming from the East, when it shall be.

In contemplations of that day unknown
 We are as lost—as they who lose themselves—

Except in love of God as seen in Christ :
The " cords of man " that intertwine, inwreathe
With all our being, enter into Christ :
It is the living Christ is all in all ;
To Him all Scriptures draw ; unto Himself
As with a thousand ties ; Him first, Him last,
Him midst, Him throughout all and within all,
Him all the way and end ; on Christ to feed,
On Christ to dwell, to meditate, to pray,—
This is our light, our immortality.
To one, one only, Future points the Hand
Which beckons through all Scripture's varied page,
The Coming and the Presence of the Lord.
To " love His coming " is the " righteous crown ;"
" To live is Christ ; " death is to " sleep in Christ ;"
And resurrection is to " see the Lord : "
Looking to Him—Him only—thus I would
Possess my soul in patience, that it may
Unruffled keep the image of my God,
And in such stillness that the noisy world
May not impede, nor drown His still small voice.

And now I deem that works, as these may be,
Of studious leisure and of sacred theme,
Which, for dispensing good, through other hands
And other eyes must pass and other hearts ;
And therefore seem to lift one to the seat
Of wisdom and authoritative speech
Above one's fellows, and to set apart,
Somewhat withdrawn ; these things, I fear, must be
Full of their peril, lest they uplift the soul
And by uplifting thrust it down more low,
Upraised in our own sight, made low with God.

Much too must be the peril to the soul
Which by contemplative and letter'd lore
Would enter courts of light; for if the light
Of knowledge should increase, and fann'd by pride
Sever from charity, light without love,
The greater condemnation will it be,
And life at best laborious idleness.

For minds that feed on sacred literature
Are wont to move too fast, and so outstrip
The moral and the strengthening of the soul,
When life doth not with knowledge keep one pace,
But duty lags behind, shorn by degrees
Of lowliness and grace. Moreover add,
The mind full bent and the intenser thought,
Which any object thus pursued requires,
However pure and holy be the theme,
Leaves less of vacant leisure to the heart
For the great work of life—unceasing prayer.
Therefore, e'en more than others, such must need
The prayers of all men; for ourselves we need,
And more than others do we need to pray;
Lest seeming wise we be with fools shut out,
Miss of the wisdom unto babes reveal'd,
And thinking to gain others lose ourselves.

Christmas.

LIKE music heard within the dead of night,
Suddenly blending with our dreamy sleep,
So Christmas breaks upon the cold dead world.
Then let us wake from the absorbing round
Of day and morrow, by the manger kneel
In adoration of the Babe Divine,
Listening for wisdom's voice, which is with God,
And bear within our souls the angelic strain,
To harmonize the jarrings of the world,
The stir—the politics—the noise of life.
This is the shrine and secret place of God,
Where He would hide us from the strife of tongues.
My God, the Heaven of Heavens contains Thee not,
Yet unto me Thou comest an Infant Child!
Thine habitation is eternity,
Before all worlds, yet now the shepherds ask,
When was He born, and where? Thou hast put on
Our minutes, hours, and days; the sun and moon
Thy chroniclers of infant months and years.
Wonderful sight! how does it fill the heart

With music as of Heaven, beyond the thought
Which man can understand, that "God is Love."

Of our first Adam have we never read
An infant in the cradle, but of Thee
The Second, and in whom is our New Birth.

Wisdom, 'tis said, with children at her knees
Doth sit; nay, she henceforth herself shall teach
E'en as a child, herself a little child.

Thus hath He clothed Himself with our mean flesh,
That we in Him may clothèd be with God,
Born from above; hath clothed Himself with ills
Which flesh inherits,—pains and poverty,
Fasting and weariness, and sorrow's tooth
Gnawing the mortal flesh, and in the soul
The untold weight of its own heaviness,
Saddest of ills that wait on sinful man;
That our flesh might inherit things of God,
Such things as He hath clothed with our frail flesh,—
Tenderness and compassions, lowliness
And purity of heart. The penalties
He took, and cut off the entail of sin.

Unknown to all around, the new-born child,
Cast out on the bleak shore of this rough life,
Crying and lifting up its hands for aid,
For without aid of human hands it dies,
And usher'd in with tears: such is the germ,
The living symbol and epitome
Of our mortality and being frail.

Unknown to all around—for even she
In knowing was as one that knew not—while
She o'er Thee wept and smiled, and ponder'd o'er
Things that she heard and saw, and musing gazed
As one half-darken'd by the very light
Of mystery enfolding her and Him.

Yea, thrust aside as one of less regard
Than one of common parents ; set among
The creatures of the manger and the stall.
Yet I in this Thy littleness rejoice,
The obscurity that mantled Thee around,
Of men unknown, unnoted ; for e'en thus
It ever has been and it is with God,
That He is hidden and we see Him not.
'Tis so in nature, so in providence,
And much so e'en in grace ; the little things
That are around our path, meek infant ways,
Are full of Godhead, full of mystery :
For " what ye do unto the least of these
Ye do to Me." As cruel Herod then
Did to meek babes what he would do to Christ,
So we receive Him in His little ones ;
See Him in them, and them in Him. E'en now
Behold the kingly host with which He comes,
The infants new-baptized in their own blood
On threshold of the morn ; sweet new-born babes,
As silver drops that on Thy cradle hung
Of radiant shining dews, by the rude air
Wafted to Heaven ; while yet in shining beads
They hung around, the rising sun hath turn'd
Their glittering beams to red : they heard that voice
Which from that manger spake the King of Heaven,
" Suffer these little ones to come to Me ;"
And so they heard, and rose, and went away.

O wondrous day of weakness and of power !
Nature is dead and cold, and speaks of death ;
And where shall we beneath her winding-sheet
Read aught that tells this mystery of God ?

Snowdrop, meek flower, that speakest at our feet,
A voice as from the ground, thou hast withal

Such language, that he hath no human heart
That is not moved thereby ; mute eloquence,
Like this poor Babe and manger, so thou seem'st
To hang as guilty though all virgin white,
Bending thy head in meekness, and as fain
To hide 'neath the green boughs which winter hath.
But yet the friend of winter, and as one
O'ercoming with its silent pensiveness
The raging elements that range abroad :
A silent comforter when storms are loud,
It lifts its head and droops, and hides a tear.
Yet who could understand thee, speaking flower,
Ere Christ was born ? Plato might vainly strive
To know this language, this thy character
Of meek and patient sorrow, pure of stain,
And yet as one that mourn'd. Take it away
From its own parent nook, and place among
A rich array of flowers in wintry vase
To deck some fair saloon, and 'neath the rest
It still will seem to droop and hang its head,
As one amid their fellowship that mourn'd.

Nor only flowers without, but nearer yet ;—
In white untainted of Baptismal snows,
On which there lies the purple beam of morn,
In our own homes shall we this lesson read
Of Christmas, of meek beauty that endears,
And in its very weakness hath its strength.
For Christmas-tide with its mysterious Babe
Hath set its language, fragrance as of Heaven,
Upon all children that are born of God,
Children of Grace. Nay, from this hallow'd Birth
Nature herself upon her little ones
Attractive powers and beauty hath diffused.
For doubtless mindful of that Babe Divine

Hath God to infants given such touching grace,
Such winning ways, the sight of which alone
Seems to breathe innocence in this bad world,
And to suspend the thoughts which sway and rule
Our tempers and our hearts, till men have made
The robe of Baptism like a winding-sheet,
To cover the uncleanness of the dead.

Sweet innocent, wet with the dews of morn,
Bright with its rays, thy tender dimpling smile
Hath to me something of unearthly charm,
Nor less too have thy tears ; nor hath this world
Such strength as is in thy sweet helplessness ;
For it hangs passive on the Almighty's arm,
And therefore is more powerful than the world.
And fierce vindictive passions in the height
Of their tempestuous rage have been allay'd
At sight of tender infancy, and men
Grown old in sin have, gazing on thy cheek
In momentary sadness, felt the peace
That is with thee. O tender little one,
Like a blue harebell in the desert found
Beneath a rock, and gathering all the dew,
Its chalice bowing on the slender stem,
And hanging on it Heaven's own silver tears ;—
Not without hope, meek infant, that there is
Wisdom with thee which I would lean to learn,
And in the desert of my parchèd life
Take home the peace thou teachest, all the lore
Wherewith our Christmas day hath gifted thee :
In thy dependence, in thine ignorance,
In thy felt helplessness, and care of God,
There is Almighty wisdom, more avail
Than in all seeming powers of mind and strength ;
For God Himself hath been—is in a child.

Hence too this wintry season of His Birth
On this world sheds its gentle influence,
And on its people, on their stony hearts
And features casts a ray of kindness,
Melts awhile iron tempers, putting forth
Conciliatory hands, and opes the heart
To gleams of charity; though such again
Runs forth in worldly mirth, fevers the pulse,
And drowns the better thoughts it would infuse
In revel, kindling fire of after pains,
And laughter to be cause of after tears.

Nor only here on earth our little ones
Have from this day of Christ the endearing strength,
But they are loved of angels, who behold
The face of God in Heaven, for His dear sake
Who hath been as a child,—'mid children one,
But never one 'mid angels. On them thus
He shines from this the cradle of the morn,
And they give back the rays He on them sheds;
For mouths of babes and sucklings speak His praise.

Mysterious Childhood, how it has within
The opening mind that which should ever be
The goal of all our being, and the crown
Of perfectness at which our life should aim;
Its lofty aspirations full of Heaven,
And yet contented with the present hour.
Something it hath from a diviner fount
Of light we know not of, which thence wells forth
On after-life, which then is nearest Heaven,
When most resembling childhood; as the dawn
On Eastern seas, half mingling with the dark,
Shoots forth a freshening beam unto the West,
So doth our childhood, with its light from God,
Anticipate the wisdom of the grave;

Seeming withdrawn awhile, and left behind
At threshold of our course, it hath o'erta'en
Our manhood and its boasted intellect,
Wise in the cares and schemes that bind to earth.

Moreover this the Cradle in the stall,
Which points to, which portends, precedes the Cross,
How it becomes to us the key which opes
This our mysterious childhood, and the powers
Of Heaven-protected helplessness ! The child,
All smiles and tears when waking to this world,
What is it but the sign and tender type
Of love and sorrow ? These two are the cords
With which it binds itself unto all hearts
In wondrous sympathies ere speech begins ;
Magic persuasiveness, to which responds
The heart of fallen nature ; it is these,
Sorrow and love, like rays and dews from Heaven,
Make up the cup of parent-tenderness,
And fill the mother's being ; and again,
When childhood melts in youth, their joys and pains
Are but another page in this our life
Of love and sorrow : these the tendrils oft
Which hang and creep on earth and bend to earth,
But should put forth their arms and raise us up,
And lift us to the Cross in the Eye of Heaven.

My little one, e'en now in thy sweet ways
Thou art all hedged about and compass'd round
With love and sorrow ; these twin sisters, these
Are thine attendants day by day, and nurse
With smiles and tears ; these daily on thee wait,
Sorrow and love, these are of Christ, and these
Tended His infancy, grew on His life,
Spake in His actions ; all His awful words,
And all His countenance in doing good,

Were love and sorrow. These upon thee wait,
These eloquently plead, meek babe, for thee.
Oh! may they never leave thee, never part
In their attendance on thee, but still wait
Upon thy growing years, and school betime
Thy childhood in all wisdom—ne'er be found
Asunder—for the sorrow of the world
Is without love; and all their love, which fain
Would flee from sorrow, ends in bitterness:
Sorrow and love Divine, these ever dwell
With innocence and ignorance of ill.

Sweet helpless infant, can it ever be
That the Almighty God was such as thou?
And if it be so, what is all our strength,
Our wisdom, and our learning, and our pride,
If the Almighty God is such as dwells
With thee? Thou art within the world, dear babe,
But sleepest and awakest ignorant
Of all its storms; the winds may howl around,
But thou, sweet nursling, carest not; the storm
And snow may gather round thee, but impede
None of thy smiles, nor dim thy pleasant eye.
The storms that sway man's passion, storms of state,
Or in the circle of domestic life,
The achings of the heart—remember'd sin—
Losses of gain or honour—future harms—
What are these all to thee? Yet thou art still
The very picture of all helplessness,
And left alone—left for awhile—must die;
Yet mightier in this thy feebleness
Than all the arts and arms of this bad world.
The infant and the dragon that pursues
And ready to devour—this—this must be
The symbol of our strength unto the end.

The leopard and the lion and the wolf
The "little child shall lead;" the children sing
Hosannahs in His temple; children are
The followers of the Lamb where'er He goes.
And greater than in kingly might array'd,
With chariots, horse, and his "ten thousand slain,"
Was David at what time he said with God,
"My soul is even as a weanèd child."

Then sanctified be this sweet hallow'd time,
That brings the sun and summer of our hopes
In the mid-winter, and on the decline
And winter of our age scatters fair flowers
Of all the spring, the modest flowers that breathe
Of infancy and hope, and of our God
Coming a little Child to dwell with us;
For thou art very summer to the soul,
Thawing the thick-ribb'd ice around the heart,
Lighting the eye with sunshine. O new morn
Of being, with what tender hands art thou
Lifting us up and making all things new!
May this the Christmas of the wintry year
Throughout the annual circuit of the sun
Dwell in my heart, and make it all to be
A Christmas-tide of hope; in these employs
That now engage my feebler time and powers,
Companionship of childhood, day by day
And morn by morn awakening up to teach,
And be in teaching taught. With children thus
Clothe me with childhood's thoughts, and with the glow
Of innocence untarnish'd by the world,
Fill'd with realities of things to be,
With freshness drinking in things that have been,—
Of Abraham that walk'd above the world
While in the world, who ever walk'd with God,—

Of Joseph and his brethren,—of the child
Ta'en from the bulrush-cradle on the Nile
To Pharaoh's palace,—of the shepherd son
Of Jesse, loved and chosen,—and in all
Of Christ—still ever present, ever hid—
Most present when most hidden oft—to men
Who walk in sorrow,—Him to trace in veil
Of other times and histories, as meet
For childhood of the nations, and not less meet
For childhood of our years.

Alas! the world

Would render e'en the Scripture's hallow'd page
Cold as a thrice-told tale, while Childhood still
Reads with new eyes, divine interpreter.
In these our early readings ere the dawn
Twice hath one little boy, when came his task
To carry on the intermediate verse,
Paused—then essay'd and paused again, his heart
Too full for utterance. I was as one
That noted not—he hid his face and wept,
And wept again, as if still unobserved,
Nor could his task resume, for tears had choked
His struggling voice. I spake not, but I thought
Of tears which angels weep; for at each time
It was Gethsemane of which we read,
And Him who there was suffering for our sakes.
And then, methought, this loving tenderness
Seem'd a deep well within him where may sleep
The image of his Saviour 'neath the soul,
Laid up with best affections of the heart,
Ere they are wither'd by the unfeeling world,
With all that is exalting, gentle, pure.

'Tis thus that Childhood hath o'ertaken Age;
For that meek child hath been to me like one

Ta'en in His Saviour's arms, held by His side,
And in the midst of His disciples placed,
And who return'd that love which he received,
Which it is life to know.

And thus for me
He that hath shut me from the outer world—
From cottages and homes of His poor flock—
To house with painful sickness day by day—
To grow familiar with the face of death—
Hath haply thus design'd that I should thence
With these His own meek little ones around
Stand watching—from His face to gain that love,
That I may know His mind ; for if it be
Such awful doom, as that of worthless brutes
Cast stone-bound to the waters, if so dread
One to offend of these, then it must be
Angel-like to protect—to lead—to guide—
Careful lest evil in ourselves the while
Take up the will and guidance—to infuse
The taint unconscious of our own past life.
Yet e'en this fear to watchfulness and prayer
May urge the rather, and from the sick soul
The fount of evil cleanse ; in this our grief,
As children clinging to their mother's breast,
And hiding there the face suffused with tears,
So may we to the Church as little ones
In love and sorrow hide.

The nameless charms
And sweet endearing grace which God hath shed
Upon His helpless ones to win our love,
And court the loving tendance which they need,
How melt they fast away with growing years !
The ways—the looks—the forms of childhood sweet,
How would we yet retain them still the same ?

But they in a few weeks are changed and gone—
Fast as on threshold of the opening Day,
Beneath the feet of the advancing Morn,
Upon the Eastern heights the roses fade—
Fast change, and die in other hues ; e'en thus
The lovely forms of childhood change and pass
So quickly, yet unnoticed in their change.
We long to catch and note them as they fly,
But they are not ; so lovely every stage—
Of speech, of gesture, of first opening thought,
Yet fleeting,—and the babe of yesterday,
With all its charms, another is to-day.
Emblems how all in life that we would prize
Of cherish'd form or intellectual grace,
Or feeling and affection, pass away,
Like hues and petals of the flower that fade,
Yet fading leave behind the chalice form'd,
And seeds of after life : so all these scenes
And stages, though so fair while they remain,
Yet are not of our own and proper selves,
But mould and form us for eternity.

But hark ! the week is gone, now the eighth day
Is heralded from tower and spire—the day
That marks the Infant Victim for the Cross.
But this day louder is the world's own voice
Than that of sacred Church, with iron tongue
Tolling the knell of our departed years—
Of all things that are gone or going by.

Alas ! how many times we needs must die
Before we hence depart ! 'tis nature's law ;
But Grace would go before and sanctify
This law of nature, take it for her own ;

And Circumcision with its early day
Comes in among the cries of infancy,
Ere tears from fountains of the soul within
Have learn'd the accustom'd channel down the cheek,
And antedates the wrong. The Second Man
Thus takes the sorrows which the first man sow'd,
Known by the wreath of thorns around His brow,
The Man of Sorrows ere the Prince of Peace.

Mysterious wisdom, pearl of costly price,
As in a beauteous casket here enshrined,
The Circumcision and the saving Name ;
The eighth day and the first ; the first again
Returning in the eighth ; the eighth which speaks
Of resurrection and a second birth,—
Life hid in Christ, in Him to be reveal'd.

And unto us who number yet below
The gates of time which mark our pilgrimage,
The Circumcision and the New Year's day
Together blend to form a wintry wreath,
The ever-green enwreath'd with flowers that die ;
For New Year's day doth speak of short-lived flowers,
Of earthly hopes and treasures going by ;
But Name of Jesus of the wintry green
Which hath the semblance of undying life ;
The Name at which created things shall bow,—
The kingly Name upon the Cross inscribed,—
The Name which in true Canaan gives to rest,—
The Name of the Unknown,—that blessed Name,
The key of the abyss, the door of Heaven,
The treasure-house of Mercy, which the trump
Of Pentecost return'd in thanks to Heaven,
"Thine Holy Child," against whom all conspire,
"Jesus, Thine Holy Child, the Name at which
Wonders and signs go forth." The Name of God

In goings forth as Man, when He shall lead
The army of His Saints all clothed in white ;
The Name of life in circumcision found ;
The circumcision of the heart and tongue,
In spirit and in life, in ears and eyes,
Without which every soul that seems to live
Shall be cut off from Israel of our God.

The Victim's blood hath mark'd the Innocent,
Like purple beams upon the unsullied snow
Just come from Heaven, and thither to return.
" Made sin for us " that we in Him might find
The Saviour, and put off all sinful lusts,
Put on Himself, Himself our righteousness.

What shall bear witness to the mystery
That we ourselves in Christ are circumcised,
Though by no earthly hands ? and what is this,
The spirit's circumcision ? 'tis to yield
Houses and lands and children, wife and friends,
That we in loving Christ may have the same,
Both friends, and wife and children, house and lands,
In Christ, so having not we have the more.

But why with such unalterable bands,
E'en superseding the Sabbatic rest,
Hath the Law bound it to one day—the Eighth ?
But that the bridle on our passions set
Avails not, save in Him, the rising Morn,
The Sun of Righteousness in whom we live,
Risen from the grave as buried there with Him.

O blessed law of love—love that makes light
All labours, and the painful turns to joy !
" For circumcision it availeth not "
In the old Adam, though it mark the soul,
" But the new creature." Thus in Thee is given
Life to dead rites ; the life which learns in Thee,

Hard lesson else, to sacrifice the will,
And bind it to the altar of Thy love
By fetters of obedience. Thus art Thou
Rising up early, seen as one in haste,
In spirit of true Sonship, to perform
No given commandment, but the Father's will,—
Loving obedience ; that from henceforth such
In spirit of adoption may be ours,
Hallow'd in Name of Jesus ;—e'en for love
Choosing the sterner part ; though innocent,
The guilt-denoting rite to take and bear,
In sympathies that yearn'd o'er sinful man.

Rising up early in the morn to go
Unto the Mount of Sacrifice, ere dawn
Is Abraham on his way. Now the red streaks
Are with the rising sun, and usher in
The sad, sad day of woe, to set in tears ;
Ere the full red which marks His going down
Shall note hereafter Resurrection's morn,
And that great glorious morrow God shall bring.

Thou art in love with our mortality,
And hastenest to Thy Cross before the time ;
Not only in Thy Manhood all Thy Blood,
But in Thy Childhood, wouldst Thou shed for us,
To hallow Childhood's sufferings, and invest
With soothing sense of Thy self-sacrifice
The pains of infancy, and early show
The Lamb of God. Oft as we tend and gaze
On childhood's throes, opening the heart to bleed,
Pondering on innocence, and Adam's sin
Born with us, and its sorrow,—this Thy woe
In tender love sustain'd, this infant rite,
Speaks to us more than all philosophy
Laid up in storied tomes or accents sweet

Of lore divine that charm the sense of pain.

For e'en from early childhood unrestrain'd
To add to things that minister to all
The Adam seeks within us, and the Eve
Listens, and then admires, with curious ears
And wondering eyes, then takes and eats of death.

But circumcision and new life in Christ,
On the eighth day arising from the dead,
Shall guard the Tree of Knowledge by the paths
Of boyhood, when the serpent lies in wait,
Tempting to thoughts forbidden, goodly fruits
Where hidden death, once tasted, once for all,
Passes o'er the whole life. Of discipline
So needful is the rod, and healthful pain,
Engraving on men's souls the sacred seal.
For in our childhood opening to God's love
Faith in the Blood of Christ is as the rose
Tender and beautiful in the meek bud,
Wet with the morning dew, the genial life
It drinks from Heaven upon the earthly stem ;
And Circumcision with its type of pain
The palisade of thorns that girds around,
Marking true faith from its weak counterfeit.

Beside our garden walks these wintry days
There is what seems to be a purple rose
In all its lineaments, and fair to see,
Yet 'tis scarce more than semblance of a rose,
Hath not the fragrant power and nameless grace,
And is without the thorn. Thus all in life
That blooms and hath no thorn, hath not the power
Of soul-subduing good ; nor is the Name
Of Jesus save in circumcision found.

But we, so tender of our little ones,
Shrink from the cold of the Baptismal bath

And the trine burial in the wave, and thus
Choose through all life the softer privilege,
Would walk on tapestry, self-sparing side,
Gentler indulgence, and relaxing rule.
Thence aspirations of eternal youth
In things of God grow weak ; the colder Church—
The fast—the matin—godly discipline,
And knees by prayer indurated,—all these
Are from the Name of Jesus set apart,
As things that His religion needeth not.

How save in circumcision shall be found
The Name of Jesus ? Where shall they be found,
Those jewels that make up the crown of life,
The eight Beatitudes, except in this
The covenant of suffering ? where the joy
But in the persecution ? where the meek,
The poor in spirit ? where the soul that mourns,
And mourning finds the Comforter ? All these
Are but the Name in circumcision found.

Alas ! how much must little children bear,
Untold, unheard of, sharp or angry words
That leave a wound, ill-timed severities
Of parent or of guardian, whisper'd not
E'en to their dewy pillow, save it be
In sighing dreams : and then with elder years
The school-mate—some small tyrant, it may be—
The gibe—the laugh—the name—which sink with pain
Into the tender flesh ! Yet of all these
I murmur not—it is our heritage
Of thorns and sorrows—thick set round our door.
Rather I read in them of our sad need
Of sorrow e'en in childhood : though it come
Wrapt oft in guise of seeming accident
And trivial circumstance, it is the cross

Doubtless in scale of Everlasting Love
Weigh'd out for each, proportion'd to his strength,
And sent by loving Angels, such as watch
Around their childish ways with ceaseless care.
And He His head bends low, and listens then
To hear our childhood's sighs, who heard of old
The cry of faithful Joseph in the pit,
And prayers in Egypt's prison. Thence may date
The seeds of all the good of after years.
Nor less so in the loving discipline,
Parental or scholastic, such as tends
On boyhood, discipline of God ordain'd.
All these that holy rite hath sanctified
With its deep mystery—the mark of Christ
Deeper to be indented with our years,
And from the flesh descend into the soul.

Thus Israel from its dawning infancy,
Train'd by the Schoolmaster that brings to Christ,
Bore that strange badge of suffering, else not given
To eat the Passover; faith's secret sign
That rooted in the ground which bears the curse
They who would upward rise and spread to Heaven,
Built by the attractive powers of sun and shower,
Yet need the pruning-knife. We lop below
The branches of the tree that rises o'er
Our dwellings, that in height and nearer Heaven
It may bring forth and multiply its flowers,
Mantling them o'er with summer shower of snow,
Or bear its clusters 'neath the autumnal eaves.

The spirit needs not superfluities
Wherewith ambition clothes the outer man;
These must be held as nought, if e'er the soul
Would reach the perfect stature found in Christ.

Now immortality is at the door

And the morn breaks, but 'tis midst clouds that swell
With weight of human sorrows, and look black
With waters of affliction ; till the sun
That gathers them around him at his rise
Hath gilded o'er, and like a glorious dawn
Hath made to be a door of Paradise,
Through which we enter ; but in entering chill'd,
Wet through the clothing which would keep us warm,
Wet with the dews of sorrow to the skin,
Are taught to suffer with a suffering Lord.

This circumcision was in Moses seen
When he was given unto the dangerous wave,
All earthly objects cast aside and lost,
When taken up to God, and given to rear
Unto his natural mother, yet from thence
In Pharaoh's palace as a stranger dwelt.

This is the dying lion, in whose death
Is found the sweetness of undying life ;
The covenant of suffering which no age,
No state is free from ; such was Isaac's sign,
As dying while he lived, the sacred seal
That set apart the victim doom'd to bleed
For sacrifice ; long on the secret flesh
This Israel bore, but bearing knew it not,
Or would not have denied upon the Cross
The Giver of all life who came to die ;
The Lamb slain ere the world's foundations were,
The Lamb that died in Abel, died again
In Isaac, was with Jacob on the stone
His pillow, and with Joseph torn and sold
And buried, o'er his son with David mourn'd,
Was with Isaiah sawn in twain, and wept
With Jeremiah, in Ezekiel scorn'd,
With Daniel praying in the lion's den,

And with the Princes three He walk'd the fires.
Thus in the weakness of the flesh that shrinks
Shall Israel wrestle with his God ; and still
The more he fails within himself, the more
Shall he with God prevail. Thus at all time,
When fires of persecution shall descend
Into the branches of the Church on earth,
His Presence shall be seen, His voice be heard
Speaking therein, as when it wasted not
In the Egyptian furnace, but the more
Full of deliverance unconsuming burn'd.

This is the Angel's sword at Eden gate
Which keeps the Tree of Life ; by this the Saints
Press onward, while the world with wonder sees
The secrets of that garden, compass'd round
With sorrows from without, and griefs that lead
Unto the Comforter who from all eyes
Wipeth all tears. He promised and He gives ;
We have no sign but that of Jonas dead
And rising, thence renew'd for life divine ;
Sign multiplied around us day by day
In all the sons of God ; the sign from Heaven,
Which Jews behold and yet believe it not.

But lo, by the Red Sea and desert strand,
Her new-found joy with fears and sadness mix'd,
The Mother and the Burden of the world !
Behold, He comes ! lift up the gates of death !
Since Sorrow is the portion of the Saints,
The handmaid of all virtue, such must be
The pledge of Resurrection. Therefore this
Thou bearest to the region of the Dead,
Fresh from the penal rite, from Herod's sword ;

Within Thee and without the Victim mark'd
For suffering, and for dying set apart.

Egypt, arise, and shake thee from the dust,
See, to thee comes the Conqueror of death !
O strange mysterious land, so fertile found
As like another Eden, yet the while
With passing generations and with kings
Together knit in one confederate bond
In making their own graves ! as if but born
All thy life long to build and form thy tomb,
And then to enter it, and clothe thee round
With universal death. O wondrous clime,
So emulous of stately pyramids,
Palaces of the dead, whose living aim
And sole ambition was thy death to die
In ampler monuments, and be array'd
More richly in thy dying ! Teeming land
Of sepulchres and coffins, as of one
That knew nought but the mystery of death,
Nor cared to know ; and yet with all thy fanes
As one that vanquishing was vanquish'd more,
And shrining this unwillingness to die,
Died but the more ; erecting on all sides
Trophies of death. O region of the Dead,
The mighty Dead, like busy ants at work
To lay up wintry store, or as the worms
That weave themselves a costly sepulchre
With silken threads and insect tapestries
Enshrining angel wings ! Thus Nature felt
Lost in a mighty void, and in the dark
Grasp'd at some hidden life it knew not of,
Stretching its hands in vain, as if in scenes
Of life's most fertile fields it had not life,
And sought it thus in death. Behold the Child !

The Circumcised! He brings the saving Name,
The wisdom which ye know not, yet would seek,—
The wisdom of a life which daily dies,
That it may find that Name which ever lives,
That Name which like the sun upon the cloud
Hallows the Sacrifice, and o'er it forms
A crown of promise and the Conqueror's bow;
That Conqueror He hath "upon His thigh,
And on His vest of Blood a written Name;"
That Conqueror whose goings forth have been
From Everlasting. 'Tis the Lamb that comes,
That "conquering and to conquer" comes to die,
With His own army dyed in their own blood,
Innocent babes that on His goings wait.

Egypt, in thy great darkness light hath dawn'd:
Full soon thy solemn cells, mysterious still,
Shall peopled be with saintly anchorites,
That sought for death in life, that they might find
Their life in death,—might find that saving Name
Which is the true embalming of the dead,
The Jesus in the circumcision found.

Around His holy Head are glorious beams,
For now the dread Epiphany begins
The circuit of all time—week after week,
The circle still increasing, eddying on
For ever—till it compasses the world,
And ushers in the Everlasting Light!

Lent.

Lo! from my window, as I stop to gaze,
Between the embowering shrubs, lands far away,
With all their habitations bright and clear,
Come out beyond the Severn, on the sight
Brought in unwonted nearness; close at hand
A broken rainbow speaks a falling shower,
Else all unseen; it is the sky above,
Tearful and dark, and overhung with clouds,
Which makes the distant scenes to shine in light.
And thus the approaching time of penitence,
And sorrow, lightens up the realms afar,
Beyond the Western river of our death
Which flows between. And I remember'd then
That it was written, for the pure in heart,
"Thine eyes shall in His beauty see the King,
And shall behold the land that is far off."

Beautiful sights, that still break forth anon
Around our earthly dwellings and our paths:
Some grace or strange majestic power of Heaven
Blending with earth, that o'ertakes unawares

Our dull, low, creeping thoughts, or on our course
Arrests with glorious vision ! Yesternight,
On a dim clouded eve, above the hill
And the dark trees a sudden blaze of light
Reveal'd the moon with more than usual round,
Lustrous and full and white, o'er the blue heavens
Shedding pale gleams 'mid mountain-rolling clouds ;
Such lift the heart from earth : 'tis not the sight
Of glory or of beauty, nor diffused
The sense of the Unseen upon the soul,
Serene with the sublime, soft with severe,
But that they are our Father's, Him they speak
And are His loving harbingers abroad,
Walking in silent brightness ; it is this
That round their goings sheds the unearthly charm ;
'Tis this that makes them sweet, makes them divine
And lovely in their beauty and their power ;
'Tis that they speak of God, that they are His,
And He is ours. O glorious tearful Love,
That fills the o'erburthen'd soul, and o'er it flows
With awful tenderness ; this is the light
That should invest all that is fair and great
In nature, in themselves but little worth,
Till seen in all their varied characters
To speak the eternal Beauty which is ours
By Mercy pardoning sin, which leaves below
Some vestige of His glory, some remains
Of Paradise, and love not all withdrawn.
Such sights majestic on His goings wait
In the Apocalypse, and raise our souls
From nature unto grace. Then Love that wakes
Turns into sadness, to a sense of sin,
To prayer and watching, to abasement low,—
To dwell where Love and Sorrow have their home,

Which is the Cross of Christ. Thus on Him wait
Whate'er is fair in this our outer world,
Kindling our love to Him that made them all,
And through our love may bring us still anew
Unto His Cross of goodness and of power :
Infinite power and goodness infinite.

Thence all things read anew ; all things shall speak
This language of the heart, which there hath made
Its home, its dwelling-place. For oh ! how changed,
With what new eloquence did landscape fair,
Earth, seas and skies, and sun and moon in Heaven,
With all their variations to the sight,
Speak unto him of Tarsus, night or day,
By sea or land arresting, as about
From place to place he in the body bore
The dying of the Lord, and knew the God
Who spake in nature was his own loved Lord.
And thus to penitents from age to age
They speak a language to the world unknown
With other tongues the Spirit gives to hear.

Sweet as the gales that breathed of Paradise
And vernal Resurrection o'er the hills,—
The desert hills of Judah,—when their tops
Bow'd, trembling with an awful stern delight,
Touch'd by the feet of Mary, as she bore
Her sacred burden to Eliza's door.

And what if sights like these to them that mourn
May something of His glory thus disclose,
As 'mid deaths oft and daily dying, Paul
Heard those mysterious words in Paradise.
Or as when Christ of suffering spake apart,
Walking in sadness with the sorrowing Twelve,
And deep, and yet more deep, the Cross foretold,
Which He Himself and all His own should bear,

He took up to the Mount the sorrowing three,
And oh! more glorious than the sun or moon,
With all the golden pageantries of Heaven,
A glimpse of resurrection there disclosed.

And now another spring, another year
Bears on to long—long—long eternity,
Numbering the watches of our fleeting age
By callings to repentance. Spring returns,
Spring into summer melts, and summer pours
Its lap in autumn, which in winter dies,
And winter gradual kindles into spring.
Thus, now advancing and retiring now,
The seasons intertwining form the wheels
Which, turning and returning, bear us on
To the great circle of eternity,
Which in itself revolves—end without end.
Their changeful rounds set forth the Unchanging Whole,
And all their changes to the Unchangeable
Hasten, as rivers to a shoreless sea.

The spring returns, and 'neath her mantle green
Brings sacred Lent, the admonitory call
Of One who cares for us withdrawn from sight :
As if from midst the stars when night is still,
And Heavens are in their courses swift and mute,
Like sentinel who speaks of dangers near,
He came to us and ask'd if All is well.
As if on ward, with gentle-warning touch
He came, in solemn whisper heard within,
" Arise, and pray ! " or with reproving grief,
" Could ye not watch with Me one little hour ? "

Once more then—and once more—for thus each Lent
Is but the seed-time of the Great Unseen.

And oh, how short the time ! For what is life
Amid the abysses of the infinite,
The everlasting into which we pass ?
A minute spot beneath the shadows huge
Of the o'erwhelming future, hedged within,
Where lies our short-hour'd life, like valleys green
With sunny lakes and busy works of men
On verdant slopes, all circumscribed beneath
The ever-present sight of mountains high,
Alps upon alps ascending, till from view
They hide among the skies. Such be to us
The little vineyard of our life below,
Where we are call'd to labour ; it may have
Its varied sweet with toil, and gleams and showers,
And shadows intermingling with the light.

'Tis vernal Lent again ; look forth abroad
Where elm-girt fields terrace the sidelong hill
That lifts its back behind, whereon the sheep
Range for scant pasture o'er the dark-green down ;
The plough is on the slope—the ploughman sings
His matins with the lark—the harrow's march
Turns back, and then its harness'd task renews
On the hard clogs, and gathers weedy roots,
Backward and forward still renews the task :
Another scatters wide the stable heaps.
Thus nature may set forth the work of Grace
And seed-time, and the work that on us lies :
Hard thoughts to break and open to the sun
And dews of God's good Spirit, on the head
The ashes of repentance : such the task
As may by self-abasement soil restore,
Chill'd and impoverish'd by the unsparing world.

Meanwhile in heavenly places may be heard
The Intercessor's plea, Stop yet awhile—

Leave it alone—but one year more—and spare ;
If it bear fruit then, well ; but if not then,
Then shalt thou cut it down ; for where it falls,
There the tree lies for ever. He that pleads
In Heaven, on earth His warning voice applies,
With warning joins His interceding Love.

And now this gradual burst of genial Spring
Looks in upon us, and with such a call
That it must needs its gentle teaching blend,
And harmonize its soothing eloquence
E'en with the sterner wisdom heard within.

Early before the dawn hath mark'd the sky
I hear the little birds, in accents sweet
Speaking of love and joy ; and all the trees
Are swelling preparation, 'neath each shrub
Looks out some modest violet, verdant banks
Stand thick with showers of yellow primrose pale
As Winter's sky with stars ; for Nature keeps
Coming espousals of the earth and sky.
Love issues forth abroad,—the varied green
O'er-canopies his ways, while the bright blue
Soft intervenes ; Flowers spring beneath his feet ;
Birds sing around him from their sylvan homes ;
Clouds at his presence move, careering fast,
And open all the Heavens ; the Air is balm ;
Earth, Sky, and Seas and Rivers, graceful smile ;
And all his path is sunshine as he goes.

I deem it in accordance meet and kind
The Church at such a season should repeat
Her annual call to mourn. For what if Love
Builds now his nest abroad with budding gems
Embowering overhead, with flowers beneath,
And keeps with songs the same. It seems to say
We have another love, another home,

The love of God and Heaven ; and of that love
The Cross is made the sign to us on earth.
Look up to Heaven, the busy Day hath dropp'd
His curtain o'er the many-colour'd scene
And many-voiced, the silent Night invites
Our eyes, prone on the ground, to lift toward Heaven,
And ponder there on our eternal home.
See, how the dark hath shown more than the light,
Light hath the earth, the dark hath oped the skies.
On wing of swiftest motion—what repose !
Like some harmonious music—yet how still !
Silence and light and swift obedience all :
Obedience without law, light without shade.
Day stirring-tongued hath ceased—and Silence left
To tell her tale more movingly to man,
Of beauty such as is not of the spring,
Of resurrection's great unchanging year,
Pure and serene as night, when she lets fall
Her tears for sinful man ; of Love Divine,
Not sought in vernal Nature's soft delights,
But with the Cross of soul-subduing Lent.

But is there not a peace self-reconciled
Which knows constraint no more, and feels no yoke ;
For faith and virtue breathe celestial air
Here upon earth, where all is joy serene ;—
Where the light Cross knows suffering Lent no more,
For love is its reward, its own delight ?
Yes ; unto them whose will made one with God
Hath perfect freedom in His service found :
When His commands become the wings that bear
Upward to Heaven, and there find rest in Him.
But faith and virtue know of no advance,
No forward step progressive from the past,
Save where self is denied, self overcome :

As climbing vines in heights they have attain'd
Hang full with summer fruits, and there repose;
Yet rise not thence save where the tendril spreads
Cross-like its hands, uprising shows the Cross.
'Tis thus on earth, where our probation blends
With the infirmities of human will;
For that must on it bear our Master's sign
Which would increase His love; it is the Cross
Gives wings to Prayer, for Heaven-conversing Prayer,
When Fasting and when Sorrow hedges in,
Is then most strong and sweetest; 'tis the Cross
Which sanctifies all deeds of charity,
E'en as the widow's mite—bent all to give,
Like life-blood from the heart—thence dear to Him
Who gave His all for us; whate'er it be
Which we with God would treasure, if the Cross
Be absent from it, 'tis not known in Heaven;
For Alms without it cannot pass the door,
Unless they bear on them that Kingdom's stamp,
The type and superscription of the King.
With open-handed boon, from door to door,
'Mid low-roof'd cottages to pass, as soft
As wings of Western winds that breathe on flowers,—
If the Cross be not with it, 'tis as nought
With Him who sees in secret; and to pore
O'er sacred volumes—sit by flowery wells
Of ages rich in wisdom, converse sweet
With saintly men of old, in studious cell,
If the Cross marks it not, and keeps subdued
By unremitting prayers and self-distrust,
'Tis but as worldly knowledge puffing up
To leave the heart still cold. To walk abroad
In cloister'd garden haunts, for student pale,
And watch each flower and shrub, each gleam and shade,

If the Cross be not on it, with the rein
O'er wandering thoughts, e'en this too is but cause
For retrospective sorrow ; further yet,
To teach the ignorant, subdue the proud,
To move all hearts with pulpit eloquence,
And kindle the Refiner's fire in souls
Merged in the world, 'tis no avail in Heaven,
Unless the Cross be on the heart in prayer,
Sole sanctifier ; nor can this my verse
To me and others work enduring good,
If not with that Anointing consecrate
That goeth from the Cross and Him that bears
That weight of loving sorrows. Therefore sweet
I deem this season of the opening year,
Because the Church hath on it laid the Cross,
So to attune our hearts to bear a part
In vernal signs unblamed, and hallow'd thus
That sadness of the heart which oft attends
On Nature's joys—that strange unconscious grief,
Which speaks of man exiled from Paradise ;
Nor all unmeet are suffering Nature's smiles
With the Church call to inner shrines apart,
Between the porch and altar there to weep,
Although our Second Adam for our sakes
Kept fast His forty days where Nature mourn'd,
Amid the creatures of the desert wild.

For what if sympathies now stir abroad,
Making the air—the wave—the field—the bough—
All animate and vocal with delight ?
As when the impassion'd heart expression seeks
With flying fingers o'er some instrument,
And wakes and modulates unto a tongue ;
So now all Nature moulds herself a voice
Jubilant with thanksgiving, breaking forth

In beauty and in life and vernal joy.

Man's heart is made for a diviner love,
Love which may walk above the things of sense,
And hold communion with the eternal world,
Treading on all that man holds dear on earth,
And walking on the clouds with eyes that gaze
Upward to throne of God, whereon there sits
He that is God and Man; nor all in vain
Are Nature's sympathies, for we with them
Still blend our lower being, now made one
With Him who sits in Heaven. For all are His,
All to His service bound. All good He links
E'en to His throne in Heaven, where now He reigns
Above the highest star, with power to draw
All things unto Himself. The man within
Is made for love which above wisdom soars
And contemplation, fills the being whole.
What is the feeling heart, the kindling eye,
The bloom of strong affections on the soul,
With all the powers that move the heart of man,
But gifts, and tendrils, and attractive chains,
By which we might feel after, and might find,
And hold the Man of Sorrows; Nature's stock
Where spiritual love might grafted grow,—an eye
That hath been made for tears, that it may weep
On Calvary; feet that might thither tend,
The soul of love within them moving there;
Unbidden hands that there might hold Him fast,
Him whom our love hath found, nor let Him go?
Alas! that such e'en Nature's tenderness
Should be the occasion and the hold of sin,
Mating the soul with charnels and the grave.

For He Himself is Love, His Name is Love,
Love is His Being, Love essential God;

And all things unto Him He draws with love
From step to step—from chain to chain—from low
To highest—all He fills and moves with love
Which He would to Himself conform, would make
Like to Himself, unto Himself would join,
Clothed with Himself and housed, made one with Him;
Love in them, they in Love must dwell, that thus
Self they may leave behind, and dwell in God.

Yet more: our God Incarnate gives Himself
Upon the Cross to be our Living Bread,
The one true food of body and of soul,
And so our very senses to Himself
E'en in Himself hath sanctified, that they
Into Himself thus more and more may grow;
The hands, that they to Him all the day long
Be lifted up in Prayer; the knees, that they
By kneeling in their weakness by His strength
Be strengthen'd; and the feet, that they may be
His own and on His errands always found
Of mercy, on the mountains bringing peace,
Beautiful as the streaks that make the dawn;—
The eyes, that they with His own light within
May all things read, fill'd with the mind of Christ;—
Read Him in Nature and in Providence,
Read Him in daily life, on public stage,
In all things read His parable; the tongue,
That it may be all His, may speak His words,
And prayer and praise and charity; the heart,
That it may beat for Him who gave it life,
The better life, the Blood of His own Heart,
That it may be within the Well of Life.
So where His hallow'd Cross hath gone before,
His quickening Body may be stretch'd on ours,
The living on the dead, to every limb

Infusing life divine ; 'tis not to us
Mezentius-like, as told in heathen tale,
Though such was once to Him a bed of death
So exquisite in torture, when of man
The body dead in sin was bound and spread
Upon His Living Body on that Cross,
But unto us 'tis life, His life o'ercomes
And swallows up our death, with His own life
To live for ever. To each sense, each limb
Imparting of Himself, of rest in Him.

Oh, may we be of those, while time is given,
Who hide beneath that saving, sheltering wing,
Outstretch'd to gather us with earnest call !
Sweet e'en His words reproving, when address'd
Unto that little flock—His tender care—
To whom His Father had the kingdom given :
“ O ye of little faith, to be afraid
Of angry winds and storms that shake the boat !”
“ O ye of little faith, because ye fear
Having no bread !” Ne'er words of greater love,
As of a nurse who would wipe every tear
From off her infant's cheek, each fear suppress,
And by ungentle rockings to and fro
Upon her quiet bosom soothe to peace.

Wilt Thou not come to me each passing morn,
In some told miracle which with the Cross
May sink into my spirit ? with some tale
Of healing mercy, or some parable
By which unto myself Thy Spirit says,
“ Thou art the man, that need of health is thine ?”

Wilt Thou not come to me in scenes of life
And nature in the field, while to the heart
The creatures of Thy hand may speak of Thee ?

Now March's bitter and unpitying wind

Blows on the tender, meek, and trembling lamb,
E'en as the cold winds of the unfeeling world
Came on the Lamb of God, the innocent Lamb
Upon the Cross naked and suffering laid
To all the winds of Heaven—nay, all the winds,
But not of Heaven. O all ye pitying thoughts,
And all ye spirits that relentings move,
Come to my heart from these my eyes without,
And give me eyes within that Holy Lamb
To see—till they drop tears, tears which within,
When all is parch'd by the dry eastern winds,
From sore remembrances of what is past,
May come like April sun-showers! I that Lamb
Would take home to my heart, that it may be
Laid in my bosom—drink my cup and eat
My bread with me, my one—my little one,
And be to me a daughter, one to watch
And ward defiling thoughts. O mystic Lamb,
Type of endurance and meek innocence,
Still ever thus be with me, in my heart,
And in my deeds and gesture from henceforth,
And ever at my side and on my tongue,
Teaching all ways of lowly gentleness.
How can I hide him from the unpitying winds
Of contumely, scorn, and the world's hate,
But in my heart of hearts?

With gradual move
From week to week approaching comes the Cloud
Of Lent, replete with penitential tears;
The Cloud wherein God is, that we may fear,
And bow'd to earth may hear His awful voice;
Entering with Moses and Elias there,
And there to be with Christ—the forty days—
Lifted above the world, with Christ to talk

Of His departure hence on Calvary,
Learning how "good 'tis for us to be here,"
And thence with Christ descending, walk with Him
In penitential humbleness and care
'Mong men below, and nothing know 'mong men
Except Christ Crucified; so learn we how
Sorrow's mysterious sanctities, which here
Tend all the unclathing of the soul, and point
In various shapes our pathway to the grave,
May bind us to the Cross of God's dear Son,
Work in us death that we may live with God.

To wear the threshold of a good man's door—
And to pass by with silent courtesies
Those that stand idle in the market-place,
The personal talk—the light-heard vanities
That perish with the past, discourse of farm,
Of funded stock and merchandise, and stage
Of politics, and incident in camp or town,
Of wars, unholy leagues, and cries to arms,—
Shut against these the ear, if it may be,
And still more close the heart;—to talk of Christ
E'en by the way, and of His dying love,
And of the great Hereafter. Those avoid
That love the dress of fashion;—on thy robe
And fringes of thy garment be inscribed
The love of Christ and of His hallow'd Cross;—
For outward garb bespeaks the heart within;
Nor artful care, nor still less let there be
The artful negligence, but artless love
Of chaste simplicity. And flee the stir
Of controversial heats and kindling eye
Of partisanship, the contagious fret,
Mingling of human passion with the flame
Of upward fires divine; but seek the abode

Of wisdom, and drink in the pregnant words
Of one that prays. Nor seek his tongue alone,
But seek the searching of a good man's eye,
And it may be the healing; above all
Seek the absolving keys, of comfort sweet,
The Church's seal of pardon. Some, may be,
Need upward training on some stabler stay,
Some dresser of the vineyard,—on the ground
Else haply lost without all fruit or power,
Waste wandering; yet a danger e'en in this
Of too much aid, too oft appliances
Of the directing hand, lest Conscience lose
Self-guiding judgment, needing exercise,
Leaning on aid external to itself;
So frail, so subtle, and so complex-form'd
The soul of man—its motives—and its thoughts,—
Its past, its present; interwoven all
With inward make and structure; from without
Its manifold temptations, and within.
Nor can the charge and weight of our own souls
Be transferr'd to another; no one else
Can sit within the soul upon the seat
Which God has made for conscience, and there placed
The self-condemning, self-absolving judge,
The oracle of God which is within.
The tempter on external aid will urge
To cast the burden, when with sterner voice
The monitor within gives warning note
Of danger, well-advised; while self-deceit
Would plead her cause, and seek the approving seal.
And doubtless all the long-wrought tangled web
Of circumstance, of doubt, perplexing thoughts
Of right and wrong, with convolutions raised
And manifold dependencies, self-known,

Are given to exercise the reasoning soul,
To strengthen and to purify the eye
Of conscience, from the motives unperceived,
Whose subtle film the vision may impair.
'Tis oft as with the eye itself diseased,
Medical aid through all the frame diffused
Must strengthen the whole body, by degrees
To pour new health into and so correct
The instrument of vision. Conscience oft
Needs renovation through the man entire,
And daily life restored. To meet the Eye,
The awful Eye of God, nor seek disguise
The sickly soul will shrink, and turn away
To feeble human counterparts, like birds
That love to dwell in twilight. Better seek
The Eye that is life-giving though severe,
And by obedience to His inner law
And to His written Word to hang on Him,
Till weariness to rest, fear turn to love.

Such caution need the ministrations oft
Of sacerdotal aid and guiding powers
'Mid saintlike ways, medicinal and good,
Of penitents. Far oftener souls impair'd
Will altogether cast aside the bonds,
Minister to themselves the absolving keys,
In partisanship or example frail
Seeking the opiate of unreal peace.

Meanwhile, if girded with its lamp to watch,
Repentance of itself within itself
Finds theme for too much sorrow, when 'tis bent
To drive some treacherous inmate from the soul.
Who hath not found, when he hath striven and pray'd
Against some bosom sin, that it hath been
Like rousing of a viper which will bite

And leave a sting ere he resigns his place
Where he has coil'd upon the breast, too long
Left haply undisturb'd and nourish'd there ?
Yea, e'en at holiest season or in hour
Of solemn grief will make his presence felt.
The unclean spirit then most fiercely raged
When Christ was near, on hearing of His voice,
And bidden from his victim to depart.

Then fear not, but wax strong in faith and prayer
When trial seems most rife, and on thee turns ;
For safe are we in God, till sin leaves reft
Of His protection ; but relapse in sin
Denotes His anger and His aid withdrawn ;—
Full ample cause for sadness and alarm ;
For His displeasure answers to our fear.
But every conquest proves a strength Divine,
And strength Divine speaks all-protecting love.

Then what if Prayer and Fast throughout the day
Keep watch, the Rock thus smitten flows with tears,
And is its own refreshing ; better thus
Than when in dead of night the spirit wakes
All dry and desolate amid the stir
Of this world's hurried pastimes, feels the weight
Of everlasting ages yet to be—
On everlasting everlasting piled
For ever and for ever ; wakes to feel
That every day, like wave on wave that drifts
The nearer to that shore, doth render us
Less fit to meet it, adds unto the score
Of empty pleasures or of vanities
Less stern yet not less empty : at such time
In the dread still of solitary night,
When Thought lets down the plummet to the deep
And finds no bottom, Esau's bitter cry

Is scarce more bitter ; and that cry was full
Of penitential tears—but yet the wood
Was not in waters of that bitterness ;
For tears need to be wash'd with other tears,
And grief itself is cause for after grief,
Till brought to Christ, till Love hath sanctified
And His all-healing Cross hath touch'd the wave.

To Paul 'mid bonds, imprisonments, deaths oft,
Bearing about the dying of his Lord,
And his own body with no fancied blows
Bruising and beating under, there was given
Deep pleasure in infirmities, with men
Of men most miserable, yet the while
The glow within of everlasting morn
Kept its perpetual sunshine. In the dawn
The morning star looks fairest of all stars,
Emerging from the gloom, and while it stays
Bright gleams have bathed the tears which night hath
left.

In both alike, the crowded Babylon
And the lone rock of Patmos, sons of love
Admitted were to converse high with God,
When the flesh weaken'd had let go its hold
And pressure on the soul, and the freed wing
Upward arose, from earthly weight withdrawn.

When all is still in the dark solemn night,
Such thoughts may be our music, whispering peace ;
For if to Saints and Martyrs chains and stripes,
Buffetings of the world, exile and shame,
Borne for Thy sake and chosen for Thy love,
Were to them gladness and exceeding joy ;
So others in the losses of the world,
In lone imprisonment and claustral bars,
Though not for Thy sake chosen, yet in Thee,

By Thee, and with Thee borne,—they those sad hours
Have found more sweet than all the blessings heap'd
On former high estate and prosperous course.

Then what if Weakness as with prison bounds
Closes around, and Sickness with stern hand
Draws down unto the grave day after day ?
Pining Infirmary, with night-long pains
That pave the way to death, may render eyes
That look to Heaven familiar with the Face
Of the Great Comforter, who pitying looks
On those that mourn—His loved ones ; nay, at times
Pressure severe and the approach of death
Opens the eyes to things that are so great,
And dwarfs or disannuls the hopes and fears
That held the heart in thrall, when hurrying hours
May do the work of ages. Sweet such hopes
That cheer life's close. As I have seen what time
A murky haze had veil'd the sky and earth
And dimm'd the distance from the hill, when lo !
Between the clouds shot down a silver shower
Upon the western Severn, and afar
Ships were beheld within that shield of light
On confines of the Day. In other climes
They seem'd to walk, within a brighter world,
Fairer than ours. Thus have I known of peace
That came upon the last declining days
Of one who for long years had struggled sore
With a desponding sadness.

What remains

Each day when kept from sin to yield Thee praise,
Each day give thanks for the release from pain,
Each day for comforts of some timely friend,
Each day for self-denial seized in love,
Each day for merciful occasion given,

This is enough—to cut off lofty hopes
And aspirations which must fade as dreams
When we awake ; for strong imaginings
Will mould and colour as the heart inclines,
And from their own creations then stretch forth
To love or hate, and minister to sin.
These when the clouds depart shall be disclosed
In saints of God as golden steps of Heaven,
Transmuted by an alchemy divine.

Hence from this season, which is wisdom's school,
The heart may learn to keep perpetual Lent,
By which the daily cares and toils of life
Are sanctified, relieved, and fruitful made
In good ; when of itself the will is train'd
To love the Will of God, because it thus
Hath learn'd the virtue of the Cross of Christ,
And what to Him may bring, and drink from Him
Who smites and is Himself the smitten Rock.
'Tis sweet to think our path-besetting ills
And trials are from Thee that lovest us
And knowest, and thereby unto Thyself
Would draw us, waiting for our love. To us
Reproof is but remedial, though to Thee
Stripes whereby we are healed ; fleshly pains
Are wearisome and profitless until
Hallow'd by the remembrance of the woes
That made long furrows on Thy back, and marr'd
Thy countenance with sorrow ; venom'd words
Inflame, till gazing on Thee, taught by Thee,
Love shall extract the poison of those wounds.

Or look we forth where news ephemeral lift
The mirror of mankind, the chequer'd page
Of politics and trade, of strife and crime,
'Tis too much cause for sadness. Reason there

Distemper'd and discolour'd looks on man,
Shorn the sweet locks of charity; as when
The sun arising in some murky fen
Draws up the sick foul vapours round his face,
And through them looks bloated and turbulent:
In love of Thee restored her purer light
Mounts high, with genial ray she walks in Heaven,
And scatters earth-born vapours from her path.

What are our home affections without Thee?
Oh, that on those around us Thou wouldst set
The shield of Thy protection, that ourselves
May harm them not, nor soil by any taint
Of our example; and if rent in twain
These ties, may yet our love be firm in Thee!

And what is earthly friendship without Thee?
Its best estate is as some glassy vase,
Or porcelain of frail transparency,
Lifted with care and held with tender hands.
At one rude blow—the first, alas! and last—
Shiver'd upon the ground it broken lies,
All tearful, tender reminiscences.
Nor though cemented and uprear'd again
Is it what once it was, and our poor tears
Are weak disjointed fragments to restore;
It is not, and it ne'er can be again.
But Thou wouldst all our love—though one rude sin
Hath dash'd it all in shivers on the ground—
Yet Thou wouldst it replace and form anew,
Cemented with Thy Blood and wrought entire,
That it may hold the fire which upwards burns.

Alas, our earthly loved ones, and their love!
For what if rear'd throughout with constant faith?
The deepest arrow thence may reach the heart;
And the remembrance of them and their praise

From the warm heart that lingers on their love
Is but a gleam that plays upon their grave.

The loss of those most dear—of all our woes
The saddest—yet our choicest days on earth,
Our best affections are but building up
This height from which we fall—they but prepare
And nurse this tree on which our sorrow grows,
Fostering our after woe—as then to fall
When heaviest. Therefore this a gift Divine
I deem, and school of wisdom, sent by Him
Who loveth us; 'tis He hath given to weave
From fibres of the heart those tender cords
That join us to each other day by day,
Strengthening and growing till they serve as bonds
To bind our best affections to the tomb
And that which is beyond it; warnings stern,
Yet tender! for our life here would be still
Labour'd forgetfulness of coming death,
Did He not thus with love and human tears
Softenthe heart that He may write thereon
The image of eternity. In them
That we may learn of death—learn how to live,
May learn a daily dying; day by day
And hour by hour we die, 'tis nature's law,
And we are but survivors of ourselves
Because our better part is hid in God.

Who is this comes up from the wilderness,
Leaning on her Beloved? It is the soul
At peace with God, to whom all nature speaks,
“Winter is past, the rain is o'er and gone,
Flowers on the earth appear, the time is come
For singing of the birds, the turtle's voice

Is heard, and in our land the fig-tree green
Puts forth her leaves, and fragrant is the vine!"

Who is this comes up from the wilderness,
Leaning on her Beloved? O thou, my soul,
Lean thou, for thou in Him shalt leaning find
His strength grow with thy weakness and thy trust.

Easter.

THE lark that housed so low upon the ground
Is now aloft upon the summer skies,
Poising at rest on bosom of the air,
Himself unseen, or scarcely seen below ;
Or from his fluttering wings pours forth on high
The very spirit of all thankfulness,
Ascending as he sings and singing soars :
The summer day, held captive by his strains,
Feels an unwonted peace it knows not whence.

Meanwhile the higher as he sings to Heaven,
Still higher and more high on his sweet wing,
The deeper and more deep his image sinks
In the clear bosom of the lake below.
E'en so upon the wings of holy love
Whoe'er ascends toward Heaven, still as he mounts
His image by himself as seen below
Further from Heaven recedes, in rising he
In meekness must behold himself as one
In lower deeps, and less and less, until
He shall himself behold and know no more :—

Lost in the cheerful light of the pure Heavens,
Not seen by men, and who himself 'mong men
Sees not—no more below—but Heavenward borne,
He pours his thankful spirit all unseen.

Most blessed twofold vision ; more and more
To see ourselves more low and small on earth,
And nearer God to sing in His own light,
To see our shame and sorrow, and His love !

Yea, what is all, as we look down below,
Wherein we build our palaces of hope ?
A poor, fictitious Heaven, as in the lake,
The shadow of the sky, unreal show,
And semblance of that joy which is above,
Fulness of light and freedom infinite.

Thus in the mighty mysteries of Heaven,
The man is lost who in repentance strives
To apprehend ; as more and more he looks
Upon the face of Christ, and he himself
Is in the heavenly places, more of sin
In self-abasement conscious, he himself
Sees lower and still lower, less and less.

O blessed he who hath put on the yoke,
And meekly knows the rest which is in Christ,—
Rest for the weary spirit, rest and ease !
As one who doing all things is as one
Who doeth nothing ; one who bears all things,
Yet bearing is as one who nothing bears ;
And who possessing all things, is below
As one possessing nothing ;—such sweet peace
Whose calm is e'en like holier innocence,
When that her heavy burden is released,
As love in sweet communion with her Lord
Hath bound the soul, that in His spotless flesh
Yearns to incorporate and lose herself,

And has a joy within, though sadness mix'd,
Such as the world knows not, and cannot know.

Like the sweet smile upon an infant's cheek,
Which something hath of an unearthly peace,
Because no sin nor sorrow lurks behind ;
Yea, though awhile one pure translucent tear
Is yet upon its eyelids, ere that smile
Hath chased it from its place, as morning rays
The dew-drop, both together blend awhile,
Till love's bright beam hath kiss'd the dew away.
Such is the joy from Heaven the Spirit gives
Within the bosom of the penitent,
The child of God ; he is within His arms,
Nor seeks without His aid to walk alone,
But lifted up, upheld, and led by Him
Drinks new delight, the air of life, and smiles,
Strengthen'd, supported, comforted, restored.

To will alone that which is perfect good,
And willing to obtain it, this is Life,
This of the heart is perfect peace ; and thus
It is with him who wills what God doth will.
And all things then are evil in so far
As they are hindrances to this one end ;
And whatsoe'er doth too much please below
Impedes us from that true and perfect will
Which rests in God ; its source, its means, its end ;
The fountain, and the stream, and the great sea
To which it flows, is God ; in Him alone
It rises, it continues, terminates,—
That disembodied from the things of sense
The soul may serve her God, in faith that sees
And love that apprehends what God doth love.

Beautiful is the day now spread abroad,
Clear is the blue expanse, the blue more deep
For the white fleecy clouds, and sweet the sound
Of running waters ; be it mine to watch
By rural landscape, or by the great sea,
Or native mountains dear, which lift the soul
By their majestic altitudes sublime
To things of God, eternal, infinite.

Now vernal new creation all hath changed,
To beauty, youth, and light, the shadows given
Of resurrection and unfading youth
Which are beyond the grave ;—transition strange
Beyond all marvel, did not every sense
Bear witness to the change. To us who breathe
This universal atmosphere of death,
Where all are dead or dying, all things made
Mementos of our dying in their change,
Thou art our Resurrection, and our Life,
By which in our unclathing we are clothed
Day after day. This spring-time speaks abroad
Thee Who wert dead, yet livest evermore ;
And Thou hast drawn us to Thee, and hast made
Familiar with Thee in Thy walk below,
That we may know Thee risen ; made to know
Thee in Thy life of sorrows, for on earth
'Tis sorrow binds with strongest sympathies
Each to his fellow-men ; in going out
And coming in amongst us full of grace
And healing ;—Thou hast taught us to converse
With Thee in faith, and in the flesh to know
Thy Godhead, and in Thee the Father's love.

Then for those forty days Thou still on earth
Didst sojourn, oft unseen and oft to sight
Recurring, when disciples to their craft

And Galilean boats from place to place
Went as of erst, yet in their hearts the while
Bore a strange consciousness that Thou wert near,
Come from the grave, rejoicing in Thy love
Unutterably, knowing not each turn,
Each moment, when Thy Form should be disclosed;
And then, when expectation thought to see
The golden steps unto a golden throne,
Earthly—but throne above all earthly thrones,
They saw Thee gradual rise from earth, and borne
Upwards—rejoicing saw Thee rise to Heaven,
Ta'en from their sight to be in Spirit near.
So would we now, in glad yet trembling awe,
Walk in Thy love, Thy love makes our new year,
All rising, all ascending, all in Thee.

Then lead me forth by Thine own guiding Hand
And Providence, where'er abroad I go
From this my studious nook and wintry shade,
In the broad face of day, be Thou my Guide
And Teacher not the less; make sights and scenes
To be all full of Thee; Thou art in all,
And all are Thine; and blessed he who sees
Nothing but Thee in all things, sees all things
As Thine; for this is love, this truth, and peace.
Divine companionship, to know Thee nigh,
In awful interchange of silent love
Or vocal, in sweet psalms to speak Thy praise,
To speak to Thee and hear Thee speak therein!
Blest intercourse, 'mid the cross accidents
That day by day and hour by hour athwart
Ruffle the silver feathers of the dove,
Which, toss'd about, would seek the ark again,
Where Noah stretches forth his sheltering hand.
As friend with friend, in friendly sweet discourse,

Or sympathetic silence yet more sweet
Conversing, still to feel Thee near, and most
'Mid sufferings of mankind, as erst of old,
When sorrow, death, or sickness were to men
Heralds of Thine approach. So now unseen
In hunger, thirst, exile, imprisonment,
Sickness, and nakedness—in these Thou art;
And what is done in these is done to Thee.
While in each shape of suffering here below
The Man of Sorrows is approached and found.

Nor only walk'st Thou with us here below,—
With cords of man Thou drawest us to Heaven,
That there may be our treasure, there our heart—
From earthly to Divine, from fleshly forms
To spirit, that our souls may so ascend
And sit in Heavenly places, there at rest;—
From strong affections loosed and purest joys,
Parents and friends and children, pastoral ties,
Which, though by Love Divine clothed for awhile,
Yet had too much of earth; like earth-born clouds
Which catch the sun, and are exceeding fair
But come to nought. So, while we walk on earth,
Thy Spirit may all-clothe us with Thyself
And love of Thee; and prayer-taught faith, that holds
Ceaseless communion with Thyself in Heaven,
May take our dearest objects here on earth
Into itself, and into Thee, that they
May be thus ours no more, but only Thine;
Yea, because Thine so doubly ours in Thee.
So venture we abroad, and 'mid the sights
Of nature and the world, look forth with eyes
Of them who have within them as they gaze
The purer songs of an unfading year,
More sweet than those which fabling poets feign'd

Of universal Pan, with pipe unseen,
Making the woods and valleys to rejoice.

And blessed he that hath such rest in Christ,
The many sway him not, but still retired
In his own secret spirit, as a shrine
Or hermitage apart, he for their needs
Can pray, and pity them, and, pitying, aid,
And lead them toward that rest which he hath found.
For love hath a magnetic power to draw
Spirits of men, to draw them by itself,
By arts and ways untold, unseen, unfelt,
Into the object where itself hath rest.

Nor shall the streams which, myriad-moving, throng
The iron ways, and flock suburban haunts,
The spirit discompose which seeks His peace,
And hath its rest and centre fix'd in God.
When "lifting up his eyes He saw" the crowds,
"He had compassion" at their several needs,
And healed them, and taught, and fed with Bread;
When He beheld men as the "harvest-field,"
Or "scatter'd sheep," He pitied them, and said,
"Pray ye the Harvest-Lord that He will send
Labourers into His harvest;" when He saw
Jerusalem "He wept;" and so the soul
That hath its rest in Him, when it beholds
The gatherings thick of men, touch'd at the sight,
With yearning sympathies and tender love
It flees to Him in prayer Who giveth bread,
And upon Israel's mountains feeds His sheep—
Who knoweth every want and every care,
And every throb that beats in every heart.

Who hath not known 'mid crowds of thronging men
That weight upon the spirit—like the press
Of many waters, and akin to tears,

Moving amid a wilderness of souls ?
Not only such as of the Persian King,
When at Abydos spread he saw the host,
Nations and number'd ranks in order ranged,
Saw and rejoiced, and wept ; but rather his
Who to that Asian Monarch in reply
Spake of their many sorrows. To behold
So many souls, each with his several grief,
So many their pursuits, their little spheres
Of hope and sadness, that one's self is lost
In infinite of spirits numberless
Clothed as one's self in this poor petty life.
There is no solitude that weighs like this
Amid such multitudes to feel alone.
Then in this weight of sadness 'tis the thought
Of Him who knows each individual grief,
The thought of that great love that makes each one
The object of His care and tenderness,
The lone, indwelling soul, the conscious self,
Which naught but Omnipresence could insphere
With its close-mantling, all-investing love,
Which more each one shall prove within himself
By soul-experience he substantial finds
Beyond all else—reality and strength,
Like Everlasting Arms beneath outspread,
The comfort of the Eternal Comforter,
The nurse that “ dandles ” with maternal love
“ Upon her knees,” and dries the falling tear,
Familiar made with unaccustomed peace.
Then the heart in this multifarious crowd
Can beat as free as when it by itself
Unfetter'd breathes the mountain solitudes.

And now to see the living swarms that float,
And press the portals of mortality,

Souls upon souls, thick as when harvest-time
Pours o'er the fields its overflowing horn ;
Or from a rock we see the unnumber'd waves ;
Of vastness, and of love, and majesty
They speak, as they fast hasten to the shore,
And lift their little heads on the expanse
Numberless, overwhelming, small yet great.
'Tis this infinitude that wraps us round
And comprehendeth all things ; it is this,
This omnipresence clothed with power, that works
In marvels of minutest watchfulness
So far beyond our sight, yet more and more
With multitudinous eyes all full of love,
Which numbers all the hairs upon the head
And counts each tear that falls ; this is the Love
Around us, as the air that holds us up,
By which we live and breathe, surrounding all,
An all-upholding Presence ever nigh
As in the Heaven of Heavens, and which to know
Is Heaven. Yet have we power to wander far
From that which is most near—and thus ourselves
Compass about with all degrees of death,
Unmindful. O dread liberty of will !
To know Thee, and yet knowing to forget,
Or not forgetting to deny—by sin—
By sorrow or unkindness ! Here below
Parcell'd and portion'd out is this bad earth,
But common unto all are the blue Heavens,
With cheering sight and influence benign,
So free alike to all that Love Divine,
Love dwells entire for all. As East from West
So mercy stands between us and our sins ;
As circuit of the Heavens through endless space,
E'en such is Love—yet on one little Cross

It hangs, comes near, and puts on lowliest guise,
That thus the mourning sinner may draw near,
And bathe his wounds, and hang his eyes thereon.
'Tis the Cross holds the eternal mystery,
Pointing to depth, and height, and breadth, and
length,

Which brings love down to humblest, meanest lot,
And makes it the inheritance of all,
The treasure of the life that's hid in God.

As feather'd multitudes that throng the wings
Of seasons come or going, men have too
The times of their migration ; when they flock
From huge metropolis, which all its mouths
Opens, they fill the rural villages,
Drinking the freshness of pure nature's green,
And woo on cheeks, paled with the hot populous
street,

Her livelier blooms ; they flock the teeming lines
Of rapid interchanges, fill the ports
And harbours, bent for regions of romance,
Sacred or Classic, ancient clime or new,
Which most may thus alleviate the dead
Cold hand of custom, the continual weight
Of voluntary prisons ; others walk
On pebbled shores or 'neath the o'er-hanging rocks,
And gaze on the wide ocean ; where on hearts
Fever'd with the hot stir of dusty life,
O'er-strung and spiritless, the moving vast,
The solitude, the boundless-seeming spread,
The ever-changing yet unchangeable
Of Ocean's varying face, with their soft gales
Expansive breathe unutterable calm.
For 'tis the shadow of that better rest
Upon the bosom of the Infinite,

Peace of the Everlasting, and of Him
In whom unnumber'd spirits live and move,
As waves in the vast Ocean, which to man
Is given to speak of God, and be around
A semblance of His endless love and power.

Be mine some quiet shore to range apart,
Or watch 'tween rocks some clear pellucid pool,
With sea-weed waving 'neath the glassy floor
Of every hue and form, and stony coves,
And shells, and shell-housed strange inhabitants,
Adapted to their spheres in wondrous ways,
All wild and beauteous, in their shelly life
Rejoicing. I have gazed, and gazing more
Have ponder'd, till the sentences of God
Have come to mind which speak of God's own care,
More wonderful, more great in littleness,
Than in its very greatness; this small pool
Where the returning tide hath left the wave
With minute shores and bays and dwarf sea-life,
And in its rocky basin hedged around
Reflecting the immeasurable Heavens;—
'Tis as an emblem of the mighty Sea,
Its small epitome; yet in itself
A magazine of wonders, small indeed,
Such as a child might fathom, yet withal
With depths no man can enter who would trace
The Presence there of Godhead. With a child
I linger on its marge in childish play;
And somehow to myself and unto him
God speaks in these things, and we hear His voice
And feel His peace Divine; yet 'tis a voice
Which e'en the wisdom of the wise, with all
Its new scholastic lore of many names,
Classes, and kind, and kindred, fails to hear,

If tracing Nature's ocean mysteries,
In that pursuit absorb'd and keenly-eyed,
E'en in the very wonders of His hand,
The Maker of all wonders they forget.
As if an artist which admitted was
Into the presence-chamber of a King,
Were by his art so made intent to note
Trappings, and tissued robes that hung around
That Royalty, till noting he forgets
The Sovereign they envelope ; yet not so
He who for pardon sought his kingly hand,
Or in thanksgiving for a pardon gain'd ;
To whom alone the signs of tenderness
Extending all around Him were found dear,
And dear, because they of that presence spoke.

Unletter'd Ignorance may often sit
Beside the door of Wisdom, and there hear
Unearthly sounds of knowledge from within,
More than where keenest intellect of man
From speculation and experience mounts
Unsanctified ;—may hear the voice of God,
While earthly knowledge hears not, and is deaf,
Nay, by itself made foolish, by its light
Made blind ; admiring gems which lustrous are
In darkness, it forgets the Source of Light.

Thus God "gives fruitful seasons" unto man
That man may know his Maker ; he meanwhile
Weighs causes and effects, and so made wise
In mysteries of Ceres, yet knows not
Nature's own mystery that God is Love.
And thus in Eastern deserts sore oppress'd,
Buddist or Bramin, Hindoo, sage or swain,
Needing but little, and than those his needs
Having still less, yet oft in this is rich

That works of his own hands he worships less,
Than men in varied intercourse of trade
Or cultured fields and homesteads, thick with stacks
Of piled-up grain and arts of husbandry ;—
But sees the more the hand of Him that gives
And worships, where the desert hath obtain'd
The scanty blessing of the dewy Heaven,
And clings for life around the inconstant well,—
Gadames or Sahara's palmy shade.

And surely this hath simple poverty,
Like childhood, in itself that it dwells near
The voice of God, and therein hath possess'd
Treasure and wisdom, such as angels prize,
Which to the poor in spirit Christ bequeathes
The rich inheritance of Christian peace.

And so methought in that great storm of late
That shook our dwelling, nay, that seem'd to shake
The very earth's foundations, through the night
Prolong'd, and such as ne'er before was heard
By dwellers of our village ; at one time
The whole horizon one continuous mass
Of rolling thunder ; and amidst the roll
From North to South, from East to West loud peals
Answer'd each other ; one might think to hear
Articulate voices of a greater world.

And then they nearer came and seem'd to burst
About us, with the crimson forkèd lights
Most terror-striking, of the rainbow hues,
Which clothed the lights with their varieties :
Suddenly—and again all suddenly—
Like inmates of our houses—sights and sounds.

The lowliest cottager and village dame
Heard in that sound something of the Great Day,
And doubtless in so hearing heard aright.

Nay, one throughout the night upon her knees
Stay'd watching, as she said, to hear each time
The trumpet of the Archangel; now of this
I doubt not 'tis the warning God designs.
Oh! how sublime in that simplicity,
Simplicity of wisdom from above!

I saw a gentle infant as the sound
Roll'd overhead, with finger lifted up,
Stand listening; and methought that little hand,
Pointing to Heaven in that meek attitude,
Was Wisdom's very self, that listening heard,
And hearing pointed to the voice of God.

Thunder and Lightning unto children are
The Almighty speaking,—thus they understand
Language divine; but unto men full grown
Cause and effect electric, sulphurous gas,
The vapour—the ignition—and the sound
Measured at intervals;—to little ones
Unlearned they are tongues that speak to man
As God in wisdom hath intended them.
I doubt not that they hear as He would wish
Who made the thunder; and though for awhile
Troubled and in amazement, yet that still
It is the Mighty Teacher understood,
Who thus subdues the sober'd heart aright
To listen to His voice, when it would speak
Rest in Himself, yea 'mid, above the storm,
And deeper, to their troubled hearts in calm
Is heard His gracious Voice proclaiming "Peace:"
While 'mid the dread commotions He draws nigh
And whispers, "It is I; be not afraid."

That time at midnight when around us burst
Thickest Heaven's dread artilleries, was one
On whose familiar face I daily look'd,

Long since an household friend, who in the midst
All suddenly in silence breathed his last.
Beneath that sound, when loudest was the peal,
A still small voice was heard, Come, come away ;
And in that light that bathed the cottage wall,
One with that sound, his spirit left the flesh,
Untenanted until the Judgment Day.
Inward the malady ; for he had been
Of the loud thunder-peals which were around,
And blazes of red light that fill'd the room
Unheeding and unharm'd : and then, methought,
How He who held the storm within His hand,—
So that it play'd around the infant's cot,
And housed within our dwellings as a guest,
Without us and within our chambers came,
Yet not one hair scathed on a living head,
Nor leaf upon the tree,—how He meanwhile
Was calmly beckoning with the other hand
A spirit from the world ; as if to show
That not alone 'mid elements at war,
He that at midnight comes, and as a thief,
But that at all times the Great Day keeps watch,
And overtakes men when they know it not.

The suddenness of that departure hence
Of one into the everlasting place
Of disembodied spirits, is more full
Of terror than the loudest thunder-clap.
For suddenness is mark'd to us 'mong chief
Of terrors which attend the Judge's path.

Yet though to man death sudden seems, maybe
'Tis never so with God, but that He sends
Pre-admonitions, which the waken'd soul
Might notice ; sudden deaths together rise
Many at once ; or some will go before

At intervals, which place or time brings near,
Or circumstance ; or some prevenient sign
Forewarning ; need we add that life itself
Is but one lengthen'd signal of the grave ?

That night is pass'd, and all again is still :
And now the scene is changed, another face
Of nature reigns, or on her features comes
Other expression from the Unseen behind,
Speaking to man in calm and quiet eve.
The hill and giant elm-trees seem asleep ;
Their graceful shadows interspersed with light
Cover the evening fields, 'mid the scant rays
In chequer'd and calm bodies lie abroad,
And represent to moralizing eye
The gloom and gladness of mortality.
Or silent interchangeably they move,
As if in play to form life's strange chequer'd woof,
A little while upon the verdant floor,
When leaves are shaken by the passing gale.
And now we feel we are indeed amid
A world of shadows, floating all about,
Which give place to each other, and all melt
In one great shade, when gradual it lets falls
The curtain, or the mantle fringed with gold.

Some love the rising sun, within his beams
To walk, to wash their steps in dewy morn,
And as they walk gain wings, themselves, may be,
Children of youth and morning ; and 'tis sweet
To those who count long hours of tedious night
To watch the yellow light first skirt the hill,
And then the varied colours one by one,
As rosy-finger'd Morn, with saffron robe
Advancing, lifts the portals of the day
With all her rainbow hues, till in a while

The evanescent tints have fled away,
And one bright shining blue from East to West
Opes the full eye of summer-shining Morn.
Then thoughts too oft of praise and thankfulness
Fast as those hues decay ; Day spreads his wings,
And sorrow on them flies. To me this lapse
Of Evening brings a meditative hour
Of more-enduring sadness, where from hence
My solitary chamber to the West
Looks forth, and doth habituate mine eye
To the soft radiance and the mellow light
Of Day, departing hence as if in blood.
O Sun of Righteousness, then would I turn
My anxious thoughts to Thee ; O let my prayers
As incense rise to Thee, and make Thy praise
My evening sacrifice ! The healing wings
That were upon Thy goings hence, have clothed
The clouds in crimson, and around Thee shed
The tinge of restoration and the dye
Of sacrificial peace 'tween earth and skies.
The inly-musing eye thus reads portray'd,
On the red portals of the Western Heaven,
The awful calm of suffering Deity ;
As with the Twelve around Thee on that eve,
That memorable eve, that festal night
Of saddest valediction ; never love
So great, and never sorrow such as there.
Those words of dying, yet undying love,
Her Easter lesson, still the Church prolongs
Upon our ears, and with Thy rising blends ;
When consolation bathed each word Divine,
And all the glowing majesty of Heaven
Was in that sorrow, sorrow lost in love,
Till all was kindled in one burning light

Of charity Divine, love strong as death,
O'ercoming death, that walk'd in light serene.
For in that dying there was more than life,
And more than resurrection was then hid
In solemn tenderness of parting woe.
And we too, in beholding, there would bring
Our sorrows, like the clouds which range themselves
About the setting sun to drink his light,
Our sorrows and our tears to blend with Thine ;
That they may catch the radiance of that love,
And by beholding may themselves be changed,
The less lost in the greater, until we
May there our sorrows and ourselves forget.

Thus we in all things see Thee speaking rest ;
Then when the dark comes o'er this troubled scene,
May we go forth with Thee that awful night,
Beneath the canopy of the blue skies ;—
When all above is silence, all is peace,
Night fill'd with starry eyes end without end ;—
When witnesses of Heaven stand thick around,
As if towards us the Heavens had nought but eyes,
And interfered not with mortality.
Like those Twelve Legions of the angelic host
Which all about Thee stood, prepared to aid,
And saying in their watches, " Here we be ;"
When all below was anguish, fear, dismay,
The torch—the stave—the sword ; yet nothing broke
The unutterable calm that was in Heaven.
Those orbs of light traverse their silvery paths
Unerring in obedience, yet so swift
Their order'd goings, that they seem to thread
Some secret of majestic harmony
Inaudible to ears that are of flesh,
Yet to us are their courses seeming rest.

So wouldst Thou teach us lifting up our hearts
To be at rest in Thee—in Thee to find
A better and a higher law, than all
The fancied music of melodious spheres,
Claiming of us obedience, that of love,
An inner law, light, music to itself;
Which in the bosom of the Eternal Mind
Hath its own home and centre; thus to Thee
Is join'd in Spirit, and in Spirit learns
That inward light and peace, of which their rest
Is but the faint and feeble counterpart.

For here below 'tis all inquietude,
The animal and rational alike
Travails and groans in pain, from that time when
On man's destruction bent the Evil One
Enter'd the serpent, by it spake and moved.
In witness thence to that mysterious truth
The creature suffers too with suffering man;
And man reads all around his own unrest,
The mirror of himself; the only ease
It is to hear that voice, the voice which speaks
Of rest which is in Christ; for when His love
Is in the heart all things are eloquent,
And clothe themselves with language, to express
The love which burns within; which throws its light
Upon all nature, kindles other tongues,
And listening hears their syllables around,
Hears that one voice of love, and is at peace.

The season now is past—the summer high—
Thus every face of nature have I found

Where'er I go, to scenes that are abroad,
Of multitudes that throng the iron ways,
And stray beside the sea or rocky shore,
Or here where thunder opes the midnight sky,
Or shadows calm sleep in the summer eve,
Or purple clouds flock round the parting sun,
Or all the stars come forth on face of night,—
In all alike my weary spirit hears
The echo of a voice that is within,
Whether from God's own Word or Spirit pure
'Tis kindled, yet it speaks, and while I hear
I tremble—and am sad—and yet rejoice.

And what is life in this my calm review?
Nought but a scene of wanderings to and fro,
And the forgetfulness of whence I came.
A little child lost in a tangled wood,
He hears his father call, and hastes awhile,
Then stops and plays, and playing strays again
Beyond his voice; then scared at sights and sounds
He hurries on still further; but anon,
Though he hath gone, his father yet pursues,
And calls—and calls again; while shades fall thick
Perplexing on his path, and sport with light
Premonitory signs; and listening now
When stillness is around he hears his voice,
Though feebler—far away—yet answering turns
His footsteps. So I now would all things else
Forget but that dear call. While still His voice
I hear, and stedfast to the summons move,
It shall become more audible, and now
Haply be heard yet more articulate
As I approach, and hear pronounced my name;
And He within His arms may bear me thence

Helpless—that so I may not fear again
Nor wander, but henceforth to Him resign'd
Lie in His arms e'en as a weanèd child,
Repose myself on Him to live or die,
Yea, though He slay me ; and from scaring sights
Of terror, in His bosom hide my fears.

Whitsuntide.

THE Rider, who went forth on the white horse
Against Jerusalem, shall come again
With armies on white horses clothed in white,
And issue forth from Heaven against the world.

When Pentecost at first through heart and tongue
Lit up the beacon lights, the Spirit came
Pleading for forty years with outstretch'd hands,
To Israel, and the scatter'd tribes abroad,
Ere on Jerusalem the Judgment came.

Such was the type of things that were to be,
Of things that now are and prepare the way
Of the last final Coming: for the sun
No sooner hath attain'd his height in Heaven,
Than he is hastening to decline, the months
That bring the summer haste to bear away;
And so that morn whose feet were beautiful
Upon the mountains, with its silver feet
And saintly witnesses, hues tinged in blood,
Hastes to descend from its meridian tower.

"All they that sat in council on him gazed,
And saw as it had been an Angel's face ;"
But wherefore that irradiant bloom that crown'd
The face of holy Stephen ? not for nought
That glorious lumination ; the strange power
Of beauty thus withheld in mute suspense
Passionate hearts that burn'd with fierce revenge,
And teeth that gnash'd, till they should hear awhile
The Martyr's dying words, while they pour'd forth
Divinest eloquence and witness bore ;
Thus were they with a charm'd entrancing gaze
Held listening to the end, that they might hear.

Haply it may be thus that in high place
The Church hath made appeal to this our age,
As with a face of beauty clothed without,
In queenly robe of divers colours wrought,
To hold unwilling hearts till they have heard.

For thus Religion with her beckoning hand
Hath come forth to the world in these our times,
Not with the countenance by sorrow marr'd,
Or fire and blood, but with the attendant Arts,
Her handmaids, issuing forth from classic shades
And Academic bowers, while Genius opes
The way, and Learning rich with ancient stores.

May be 'tis that which John in vision saw
In the Apocalypse, when he beheld
An Angel winging way in the mid Heaven,
And all the earth illumined with his light
Before the fall of Babylon ; methinks,
The kindling of the light, whate'er it be,
Trial denotes approaching, like the flash
And flickering of the candle ere it sinks
In darkness ; thus the vengeance came withal,
Though good Josiah had restored the light

To the Mount Sion ; through Judea went
The Gospel bearing witness, that all-arm'd
And crownèd Rider on the snow-white steed,
Before the shadows which on Salem lower'd
Of that her last destruction. Sure the world
Is hurrying on and speeding to her end
With tenfold speed than hath been known before,
And there are marvels now on every wind ;—
While with electric haste, like lightning pour'd
From land to land, is all intelligence ;—
With influences viewless as the wind,
In wondrous ways erewhile unknown, and such
Surpassing thought, as amid them of old
In wildest dreams scarce found a counterpart.

What "new thing" now to-day ? what tidings new
Brings this new season ? what unlook'd-for change ?
But yesterday in new-discover'd worlds
God hath permitted the uncultured earth
To open golden treasures, such as draw
As by magnetic influence the hearts
Of people, climes, and nations ; wave o'er wave,
As seas where some great barrier is removed,
And tide o'er tide pour in the rushing floods
Of souls, in the eternal balance weigh'd,
Fill up the void, and make the desert lands
All populous, preparing the round world
For the great Consummation, which now hastes
And hurries on apace with fervid wheels,
Wheel within wheel, and louder fills the ear ;
As when one listens for some wheel'd approach,
Now labouring in silence up the hills,
Then hurrying on apace with downward course,
Or borne straight onward ; then at intervals
Distinct and clear, then lost upon the ear,

Then louder and at hand. The soul withdrawn
In solitude and stillness of calm thoughts
Thus hears the thundering motion of the speed
That brings upon us the great Day of days,
The harvest of the earth. Thus while men talk
Of golden fields and homefelt loss or gains,
Of money-markets, sinews of the world
Braced or relax'd, and countless arteries
That feed the heart of nations ;—more retired
Behind the busy scene, the man of God
Listens, should he perchance of God's own voice
Distinguish the faint undersound, and waits
On watch to see whate'er His Hand will do ;
Careful alone that 'mid the stir and noise
He may not thus forget the "treasure hid,"
The pearl of costly price, which lies unseen
In secret places, such as needs long nights
And days of watching, and all waters tried
In patience and endurance, cold and heat ;—
And that great City hid from mortal sight
Whose streets are paved with gold, and portals burn
With the effulgence of celestial gems.

The Earth now lifts her golden doors, as if
Long-hidden treasures opening by command ;
But what is gold ? and what doth it portend ?
Now gold is to corruption close allied,
And borders on decay. 'Tis peace awhile,
Then wars arise and tempests shake the scene.
The trees autumnal put on golden hues,
And are one tranquil mass of hanging gold
O'er the calm face of death. Then comes the gale
Howling its prelude through the forest halls,
And strips the golden scenery of death,
Mocks at its peacefulness, shakes to and fro

And lifts on high the besom. Wars go forth,
Rumours of wars, and in a moment's space
Tumults and arm'd dissensions rock the world.
What is the mustering and the gathering arms,
With sights and sounds that fill the Boreal heavens,
The North all moving down its conquering hordes?
When men said "All is peace," from hidden cause
Mysterious, that the tongue in faltering asks
The Why and Wherefore, and finds no reply;
Our popular voice hath fann'd itself with hate,
Blowing the fumes till they break forth in sparks,
Kindled the sparks to flame, the flame to war,
And Europe unto arms; then loud the sound
Of justice and necessity, the boast
Of power—of armies—of allies, and fleets,
And of all-conquering Science. That which should
Extinguish wars the well-spring of the strife,
The Holy Places and the Sepulchre;
But not as with crusaders leagued of old
Is England now afloat—the Saintly Isle
Of Cœur de Lion hath made common cause
With infidel and Moslem, Gaul and Turk,
Preluding types of coming Antichrist.

Meanwhile the womb of time, its destined course
Fulfilling, throbs as with portentous throes,
Ominous to disclose great destinies.
And like those fabled giants which of old
Heap'd mountains upon mountains in their war,
And mingled earth with Heaven, so all things seem,
Like heavings from beneath which shake the world,
Gigantic in their shadows, and assume
Proportions in their vast electric moves
Commensurate with those great prodigies
Which shall attend the coming in of God.

And what if distant thunders for awhile,
Which once awaken'd on their mountain bed,
Now pause again and sleep? the very calm
Seems ominous, and though the gale be still,
The sudden risings of the unquiet leaves,
Their hurrying to and fro, and whirlwind dust
Arising, and the blackness which anon
Runs with its ruffling shadows o'er the face
Of the broad waters, these make calm itself
Portentous and expectant of the storm.

The sportings to and fro of the light leaves,
Light as the air, aerial notions vain,
Wild fantasies, and empty nothings void :—
These oft may indicate the fearful sport
Of unseen powers of evil, and combined
With horrors which they cover for awhile
With light soft-floating veils; such idols old
Of worship, empty names; and popular cries
Of revolutions wild, when tempests sway
The multitudes; behind them in the shade
Were devils, and the background full of Hell.
As sportive doctrines light glanced o'er the Seine,
When terrors black as midnight mirror'd were
Within its depths, and palaces of blood.

Meanwhile be not unmindful in these signs
The love of money was the spot of heart
That mark'd "the man of sin," when humble guise
Conceal'd "perdition's son;" a golden cup
Is in "the mystery," and fills the hand
Of Babylon, the gold-clad sorceress;
"The glory and the kingdoms of the world"
Were offer'd once in vain; but not in vain
To the incarnate enemy of God.
But who his followers? what battle-field?

What nation, and what army, and what arms ?
I doubt not—no such hosts as range apart
The Roman and Waldenses, armèd crowds
In which on either side doth Satan pass
Unseen from man to man, by secret hearts
Numbering his host and unknown votaries.
Away then with the idle Seers, which thus
In climes and peoples, marshall'd rank by rank,
Would see the secret things which are of God.

Again: when exiled Jacob on the stone
Slept houseless, he was visited of God,
With angel hosts and ladders into Heaven,
Richer than palaces that lowly bed.
And without staff or purse in Christ's own garb
Went forth that better Israel of the Twelve,
Shod with the Gospel-tidings ;—what if then
Wealth may attend and harbinger the approach
Of him, whom men shall praise, adore, and serve,
Christ's enemy ? Are these the golden wastes,
Seeds of the dragon sown to rise with men
For conflict, who shall compass all about
"The Beloved City ?" it defies our thought,
And all conjecture. Therefore more the need
To cleave unto each word, nor let it go,
Which Christ hath left a lantern to our feet,
And to His guiding Hand where'er it lead.

Hated and fear'd, yet praised withal and served,
Yea, loved too and adored, mysterious power,
May be that foe of God, the incarnate sin,
When time shall point and read the mystery.
A scourge and a destroyer France hath seen
The hammer in the hand of God, whereby
He would break small the nations in His wrath,
And France was wasted by him worst of all,

When he led forth her armies unto death ;
Yet France her scourge and great destroyer loved.

But this our Isle then lay amidst the storm
Beneath the Almighty's shield ; and from this Isle
The Church sends forth her branches through the
world ;—

Haply for some great good of God design'd,
Still mindful of her Saint, our martyr'd King,
For He is wont to bear the past in mind.
Unless it be that in herself she fail
Of her high calling ; from the cries abroad
Of liberty which are the breath and voice
Of the great Lawless one which is to be.
The mouths—the lion mouths—mouths breathing
flame

And sulphur, mouths in head and mouths in tail,
In the arm'd host of Antichrist, of which
Speaks the Apocalypse ;—the dragon's mouth,
Mouth of the beast, and the false prophet's mouth,
Whence issue unclean spirits, full-mouth'd frogs ;—
What if this be the over-teeming Press,
Breathing the breath of the great multitude,
And with its passions fill'd ; from whence go forth
Daily and weekly rumours, doctrines false,
And slanders ; where the popular Voice enthroned
Sits as the arbiter of sacred truth,
Speaks from itself as from an oracle,
Self-worshipping, self-listening, self-adored ;—
Authority and fealty set at nought ;—
Till pestilential is the air we breathe
Unto the better life which is of God.

But nought shall injure that which hath within
The strength of God ; for God delights to aid
The soul, when most bereaved of human help ;

And outward persecutions hurt her not.
E'en so encompass'd with her shield of light,
The Church shall walk her stedfast way in Heaven
Above the clouds and through them, which but seem
To soil, but touch her not, nor do approach ;
But dwell in this our atmosphere below.
Nor shall she heed the clamours of the world
That rise against her, than the moon the noise
Of dogs or birds of night, which at her light
Prolong their angry or complaining cries.

Meanwhile the signs and seasons I would read,
If He who gives all wisdom would but grant
The meditative eye, which as in prayer
It gazes upward on the Source of Light
Purges the visual ray. Age after age
Hath look'd for consummation, and hath seen
The folding up of this our book of life ;
Nor all in vain, for this our state at best
Is one of such expectancy, and most
To spirits most refined ; such wisdom dwells
With God, it is "the mind of Christ" that waits.
What if each age throws to the surface up
Something that seems awhile to men that watch
The coming of that wicked one, and then
As waves retiring on the foaming beach
Only again with a redoubled power
Returning, with increase at each return ?
Thus imperceptibly it onward gains
In preparation, for each threatening wave,
Though it falls back on bosom of the deep,
Yet ebbing and returning on and on
Advances. Meanwhile in all shades of men
There looks forth expectation ; some will talk
Of the great man of destiny, who yet

In coming shall restore us ; many see
Outskirts of the great conflict ; some e'en note
The mystic Armageddon, some the walls
Of new Jerusalem on Judah's heights,
Local and temporal ; in this our night
Others the Babylon in which there writes
The Hand of fire, which they with easy thoughts
Interpret. But there is too much of earth
In these our speculations ; far too much
Of carnal gross conception dims the eye
For spiritual insight ; other eyes we need
To see the mighty conflict which is warr'd
In heavenly places ; for as Christ unseen
Is deepening and progressing with His light,
The darker shade associate deepens too
With an intenser wickedness ; as they
To whom Christ's heralds witness bore in vain
Shall in the Judgment meet the heavier doom
Than Sodom and Gomorrha ; all these signs
I witness, yet I have not eyes to trace.
Yet more, we ne'er shall see with carnal sight
The City built upon a mountain seat,
Nor Army of white horses with the eyes
Of sense, nor harness'd hosts in arm'd array :
But yet the mighty dread realities,
Of which the symbols these and shadows are,
Within us and about us even now
May yet be come or coming ; sights there are,
Into the untried Future as we sail,
Not looming on the horizon,—but home-signs
Of speedy consummation. By descent
Bodies descending gather speed, so now
Things hasten to their end, with new untold
Rapidity ; the lets too which have been,

And hindrances to the vast flood of light
Which is to fill the world, seem now to break
And open ;—erst Japan and China saw
The Light, and dying Xavier left behind
A train of glory—for awhile—the flame
Earthly became and dim, and then went out,
Extinguish'd in ill savour ; Holland then
Was written in the book that chronicles
Ill deeds of men ; India, Paraguay
Saw and again were darken'd ; now anon
Those systems—Budda—Hindoo—Mahomet—
By their own inborn weakness to the ground
Seem crumbling of themselves ; or it may be
The devils leave those temples which they loved
To house themselves in homes of Christendom.

Meanwhile approaches fast that gathering round
The City of the Saints, whate'er it be,
To which the Finger of the all-seeing God
Hath pointed from the dawning of the world,
When Satan's chain a short while shall be loosed ;—
At its approach, if we are woman-born,
We needs must tremble, if not for ourselves—
Gather'd into the chambers of the grave
Until this tyranny be overpast,—
Yet for our little ones. But here our fears
May mislead, misinterpret, set astray ;
So futile our conjectures of the ill
Approaching, of what shape, and in what guise—
Before—aside—or after—the assail
By which “the mighty” and “the many” fall.
But this we know is safety more and more
Midst “runnings to and fro” on every side,
To commune in our chamber, and be still.
Yet not in indolence to sit apart,

But in the silence of the heart meanwhile
In going in and out, at home, abroad,
To walk in circumspection, as may keep
The peace of God's good Spirit, shield and helm
And armoury of God. And if I might
Keep one dear longing wish for those that come
Hereafter, and for whom I ceaseless pray,
It were that they to far benighted shores,
Kingdoms of darkness, shadows of the grave,
Might bear the truth we love, the pearl of price
Sow with much increase, that which unto us
Is dearer than the light, which unto us
Is all our life, the love of God in Christ;—
The law of love within, the law without
Of order; but within the soul I mean
Burning compassions, burning unto death,
The missionary clad all o'er and girt
With his Lord's lowliness, this, this is more,
Far more than rich inheritance of lands,
Or titled honours, or keen intellect,
Or poet's power and praise; this must be sought
Early and late, this ask'd with many tears,—
That others might the torch thus keep alive
To after generations; so myself
Would sleep in peace, and though undone the work
I fain would e'en myself have done, yet this
I leave to His compassions in whose breast
I would lay all my griefs, and hide my fears,—
Griefs for myself and fears for those I love,
In sorrow and in silence there would hide.

And now this poor remainder of my days
That sickness sets apart, if in the same
To contemplation given and studious ease
In loneliness of spirit, nay, say not

Of ease, but studious labour, and, God grant,
Labour not voiceless nor unfruitful found :—
If only I so write that he who reads
Might set aside anon and kneel and pray,
And read again, again to pray and kneel ;
And so may in communion of the saints
All of us unto God be raised the more.

It may be that the light which is abroad
Is but the warning call,—that stirr'd thereby
The pleadings of repentance which retard,
Set not aside the uplifted hand of God ;—
For restoration often comes too late,
When the appointed time hath left undone
What it was given to do,—it comes too late
Not for alleviation and reprieve,
And penitential hopes, but comes too late
To stop the path of Judgment which must have
Its righteous course with nations. See afar
Where England hath gone forth on foreign shores ;
Lift up thine eyes, and look abroad, and see,
The fields are dry as stubble for the flame,
Not white unto the harvest ; yet howe'er
Upon the green the fire shall have no power
But for a pile of welcome sacrifice.

'Tis said those heavy blights, those blackening clouds
Of insect tribes, impalpable as dust,
Whose ravages eat up the leaf and flower,
Come not till call'd for to the withering herb
By Nature's beckoning hand, that the dry wind
Or nipping frost first drinks the juice of life.
And so 'tis ever ; when let loose of God
Tartar or Goth or Moslem hordes came down
And ravaged all the fields where Christ had sown ;
'Twas first degeneracy that bred within,

And faith that on the stem hung drooping down.
It was a star which fallen had from Heaven,
To which the key was given that oped the abyss,
Whence issued forth the tribes of living death.
The life divine of Prayer and Fasting nursed
Must fan the flame, must fill with vital heat,
And filling must expand, expanding gain
Strength, from the limbs unto the heart return,
And then fill all the body with itself.
Opening abroad, the fresh and sprouting leaves
Send power and life unto the stock and root
From whence they spring. Thus must our Church
extend

Into all lands and fill the Isles, or else
Itself within itself shall droop and die.

For when the tree hath life it branches forth
Strong boughs, it spreads itself, it scatters seeds ;
And more confined the root and parent stock,
The more it puts forth flowers and flower-born seeds,
And multiplies its being. Or as wind,
The type of the Great Spirit, and the fire
His chariot, these do live but when they move,
When they move not they are put out and die.

Nor can the sword of persecution, though
It lop the branches visible abroad,
Cut off the secret life, but from the root
It spreads and shoots more vigorous, unless
The life itself be dead, and at the heart
A worm born of decay preys on life's germ.

When the Cross is uplifted, when again
Its shadow with a darkness veils the earth,
The stars shall then come forth, and here and there
Pave the dim path of the approaching Morn.
When those dark clouds are thickest 'mid the clouds
The Cross shall then appear, and hide the sun,

And God shall on His own in suffering lay
His hand wherein is life; then Christian ranks
Shall be together knit in mailèd strength.

Oh, that mine eyelids may not droop in night!
Now in the cooler evening of the day,
When passion's glow is past, God's voice I hear.
Oh, that to walk with Him may yet be mine!
Though Conscience from His Presence fain would
hide

Amid the garden trees: 'mid verdant scenes
Nature would soothe one to forget His voice
And searching eye, which is the heart's own light.
Oh, that I may not sleep the sleep of death!
For "darkness shall pursue His enemies,"
'Tis written; therefore would I look for light
From Him, Him only—look for it as they
Who watch for morning, lest while I think not
The darkness overtake me, night come down
O'er the slow footsteps of declining age.

That enemy must now be at the door
Who shall precede His coming, of all ill
The consummation; and "the man of sin,"
Judas, was hid till suddenly reveal'd,
Though many warnings compass'd him about
With spiritual eyes;—his coming was at night,
When most unlook'd for; when they were asleep
Who should have watch'd. We know not how, nor
when,

But as the locust tribes which fill the air,
Climb up into the house, and in each place,
And hearth and home are found, so would I seek
Around me and within me for the host
Of that the Great Destroyer, yet to come.

Meanwhile behold the Church of God abroad,
So broken through the new world, through the old

So overlaid, that faith itself scarce sees
The light in Heaven, and love divine grows dim !
'Tis said the sun and moon shall be withdrawn,
And stars in Heaven shall fall from Christ's right hand.
But still is His own Presence by Himself
Pledged ne'er to fail us till the end shall be.

Nor can we judge of the mysterious laws
Of Sacraments and gifts, and by what lines,
What barriers or inclosures God hath hedged
That gift of life which hidden is with Christ,
How far Himself hath bound to ordinance,
Channels of grace ; for oft in ways untold
His mercies overflow their given bounds,
And pass o'er let and hindrance ; if there be
Those unto whom 'tis given to read the Word
Brought down to man by harbingers Divine,
Who therein purge by prayer the eye of faith
To see the life-dispensing Three in One
And seeing to adore, adoring love,
And loving to obey, in all things known
Of duty ;—in such case we needs must think
That great the hallowing power ; it cannot be
That prayer to God as seen in Christ reveal'd
Should e'er be all in vain ; it needs must be
Replete with marvellous energy to draw,
To quicken, to transmute, to sanctify
The heart and the affections, though the seal
Of Baptism be unknown, the Living Bread,
And the transmitted heralds sent of God.
And this we may in all assurance hope,
Although we know not the degree or kind
Of the impediment which in such case
Mars the full gift of life ; such various bounds
In the large prodigality of good
Which God bestows in nature countless are,

Gradations melting in a thousand forms,
O'erpassing laws, found in new shapes, and still
Permeating through new ways, and where withheld
Some compensations to supply the void,
The more and less through all. The Laplander
Of summer and of winter knows the change
And in the sun rejoices, though so scant
His beams, contending with the wastes of snow.
The Moon the night may govern, and the Sun
Of Righteousness, with healing in His wings,
In His appointed courses thus may move
With more or less of fulness, and in power
More near, or distant. Albeit in the spots
Most blest and quicken'd by his living beam,
'Mid the fair fruits and richest stores of life,
Serpents may hide, lie nearer, bask in light.
Yet in the climes where plenitude of Grace
Is most impair'd, impeded, or shut out,
Save but for casual gleams that overpass
All hindrances of evil and neglect ;—
Although we know not how far in such case
The Three in One, that record bear in Heaven,
May in the secret soul their witness bear
To sons of God ; how far adulterate
The seal of that true peace which passeth thought ;—
Yet this I deem, that none to Christ as God
Can pray with a sincere though erring heart
And come away unblest'd ; and I in this,
'Midst the divisions sad and numberless,
Confusion on confusion spread abroad
Upon the face of Christendom, yet still
In this I may rejoice, and do rejoice,
Where Christ is named and worshipp'd. Thus on earth
When He was seen in faith, though weak and dim,
Yet all in their degree received of good

Who came to Christ as to the Word of God,
Though faith alone in Him as God the Word
Had the full power of life. And now amid
The strifes and the diversities and tongues,
The lines and demarcations and the bounds,
The "anise, mint, and cummin," straitening more
Things straiten'd and the straiten'd gate of life,
This we all know and doubt not, God is Love;
And to know love is so far to know God;
And in this love of God is love of man.
Here then be emulation, here the strife
This to attain; in this we all are weak,
In this halt, lame, and blind, yet this the race
Is set before us, more and more to know
That God is Love—and Love will give to know.
This only fails not, hence there may arise
Largeness of heart and freedom to forgive;
And as in those who gaze on scenes most vast
And wonderful in nature,—mountain heights
Or seas or stars unnumber'd,—as they gaze
On such the vastness wonderful, and lost
In the sublimity which fills with awe,
They see not lines and spots of measured rights
And properties, which all around them lie;
So may we grow into the Infinite,
The boundless love of God; and in that love
Forget our kind and kindred, mine and thine,
And all the littleness of this our lot,
Except as seen in God, and God is Love,
And all things seen in God are seen in Love.
And thus too 'mid the controversial strife,
The part—the party—and the party zeal,
And all the sunder-partings severing men,
In love they all to their dimensions sink
As seen in God; and seeing them in God

We shall but see them as they separate
From Him. And if we bring them to His love
By loving, for all love by nature is
Full of attractions and of sympathies,—
And if we gain them to the love of God,
That love shall teach them knowledge,—nothing is
Like love for soul-enlightening: love may add
To what in faith is lacking, and may wait
Till through the weakness of the flesh shall come
The fulness of the blessing. But of Love
We drink by lowly prayer, by ceaseless prayer;
Love is brought down by prayer, and in the heart
Spreads wings and broods and nests on our dead
thoughts,

Till from them it has given birth by degrees
To images of love all like itself,
That as God hath loved us, so we may love.

Love is to Him so dear, that He hath made
Our natural households counterparts of Heaven,
So many centres all of partial love,
Which radiate round themselves their warmth and
light;

Each hearth an altar of that sacred fire;
Each home built up by mutual charities,
With intervening ties, as centres all
And little spheres of love each within each.
That we may rise from such weak semblances
To that diviner love, which may embrace
Household and neighbourhood and distant clime.

And what more seek we for those little ones
That rise around us, and for our own selves,
In weakness more than childhood needing aid
And lamination, than from day to day

To grow up into Him who is our Life,
Nourish'd with milk sincere of the true Word,
Pure, unadulterate with party strife,
Or subtle speculations of the schools,
Which secretly infuse in things of God
Leaven of human frailty? systems wrought,
And theories of learned conclave spun,
Of faith, of works, imputed righteousness
Or righteousness indwelling, straiten oft
Dread mysteries of wisdom. By the Fount
Welling from out the everlasting hills
Be ours to sit with Jesus, and of Him
To learn, beneath the patriarchal shades.
In combination with these after times,
Those streams that flow from 'neath the throne of God
Mingle with man's infirmity; and thence,
From controversial leanings, secretly
Blend in their doctrines something to impair.
And haply varied Churches builded up
With what is local, human, temporal,
To national acclimed or popular,
Must needs develop something thence derived
From sources frail and human; as the nurse
Of constitutional inwrought disease
Imparts unto the infant; which may thus
With the pure milk of nature something draw
Alien to health, and growing show meanwhile
Impediments to full expanse of power.
Therefore the truth divine I most would love
Fresh springing forth within the written Word,
Or where more near in upper streams it flows
From out the Rock of Ages, where the Church
Stands by the Cross, and solemn witness bears
Wrapp'd in her Master's undivided robe.

Allhallowtide.

So many dropping into the Unseen,
The Everlasting! when removed awhile
From some associate scene wherein we dwelt
A few years since, we ask, and asking find
So many gone. E'en this too speaks of Peace,
Setting at rest the anxious restless thoughts
For this day and the morrow,—speaks of Peace,
For none of this world's troubles reach them more.
'Tis like a Sabbath that surrounds us all,
So near us and about us endless rest;
On our unquiet days and troubled nights
It casts its shadow of eternal Peace.

Straight mounts the morning smoke 'mid leafy elms,
Whose green and yellow hangings half conceal
And half disclose a low-thatch'd cottage roof,
Peaceful and still; beneath the frost-lined eaves
Twitter the birds, and feebly one or two
Prolongs a cheering note; in the clear air
The lowing cow proclaims the homestead near.
Then the cock-crow is heard from vales below,

And solitary rook sails floating by,
Flapping his black wings on the vaulted blue.
The shadows sleep upon the dewy ground,
Save where the smoke plays with the doubtful light.

And ever and anon on such a morn,
As if in pity for a scene so fair,
Winter doth seem as to withhold his hand,
Gazing on features which so lovely are,
Before his stifling grasp hath quench'd the light.
But lo, to-morrow his rude harbinger
Wakes, the deep-sighing wind, as no more given
Warrant to spare, and says the time is come.
And all the scene is changed—the sky o'ercast,
The air is full of leaves, a very shower
Of the decay and fall, that emblem meet
Of fleeting generations and man's life,
Drifting awhile upon the wind, and borne
Now up, now down, now onward, some before,
Some after, yet all falling to the ground.

We are like falling leaves, nay rather say
As fallen, and arising in their fall,
Like leaves within that fabled Sibyl's cave,
Inscribed with mighty destinies, which still
In vain we would decipher, while they seem
To sport at random with the winds at play.

“Now is the autumn of the Tree of Life ;”—
We all have sinnèd, and our life decays ;
Our sins are like the winds that bear away.

How fast we pass into the Great Unseen
Which is around us ! all of us are gone
Or going ; those but yesterday
Whose eyes of love and sweet intelligence
Shared mutual thought with us, are now within
That place which doth surround us, which alone

Stable and true appears ; parts of ourselves,
Like branches of one tree upon a wall,
Associates of our childhood and our youth,
Yea, they too of our manhood, household friends
E'en of last year are there ; what is yet more,
We too are on the verge we soon must pass,
How soon we know not ; it may be this year—
This month—this week—this day—and we may be
All suddenly awake, and the door closed
Behind us, and around the unchanging year.
Yet each day as it nearer brings, the while
Deadens our sense of the Unseen, and lays
Films o'er the spiritual eye ; as when asleep
Some thread of a strange dream, which we pursue,
With incident and person holds the thoughts,
Still loath to let it go, albeit vain
And mix'd with sorrow, till the wakeful sense
Breaks in upon us with substantial hand,
Brushing away the spirit-tangling web.

Ah, welladay !—we yawn—some yesterday
Who spoke this lesson now themselves are gone,
And 'tis to them no more a thing of words,—
But we to-day still moralize, the few
Left on a topmost bough, while all the rest
Are harvested and gone. We rub our eyes
And look around, and stretch our arms, and then
We are as if we were to be for aye,
Conversing of necessity and death
For images of pastime, till the past
And present, and the living and the dead,
Blend in our dreams together. For in truth
Man's spirit knows not death, but sets aside
The interlinear boundaries of the flesh,
And in its thoughts, which are its proper self,

Holds intercourse with those which are unseen
As if they were still with us.

Now again

Nature herself the lesson hath resumed
Of her autumnal shades ; prelusive signs
In the cool freshness of the dewy morn,
And in the comings on of chilly eve
Speak of approaching winter. Shadows huge
Upon the mountain sides or green mown fields
Lie beautiful, like massy heaps or drifts
Of stationary darkness, yet anon,
Long motionless, they move, and moving show
The calm of Heaven the more, like sounds that make
The stillness audible ;—to bring on man
Reflection suited to declining age,
Seasons of meditation ; all the air,
And nature's self in all the things that live
Is eloquent with wisdom, of decay
Speaking to man and of approaching death.

I pause, and listen, and would drink full deep
Into my inner spirit all the words
She speaks in living imagery, or writes
On pages of the elements ; for such
I deem not but an idle fancy's toys
To deck the moral, or the poet's tale,
The metaphor and image, to adorn
Delineations of autumnal life,
And give the form and colour to the page.
But I would hear them as the Voice of God
Speaking to us through nature, His still Voice
The which alone to hear and understand
Is wisdom ; mighty boon, great privilege
Vouchsafed to few ! That Voice from Heaven of old
Which spake to Christ in speaking seem'd to some

But thunder, unto some angelic sounds
Divine in sweetness, to the mind of Christ
Audible only as the Voice of God.
And when to Paul at midday o'er the sun,
As in a sheet of lightning, Christ appear'd,
Paul only heard the Voice of Him that spake.
And therefore in the Autumnal signs I pray,
That hearing I may hear the Voice of God,
Not as the beasts that perish. It is this
Which gives a living tongue from other worlds
To seasons and their change ; to sights and sounds
Gives utterance, makes them more than Angel-
tongued.

O Thou that teachest knowledge unto man,
Who givest the seeing eye, the hearing ear,
Whom to love is to know, to know is life,
Teach me to hear Thee, and with eyes and ears
Take in Thy counsels sent to one that's born
To live with Thee for ever. Linear signs
Are on the dial's face, all dead and mute
In their significance, until the sun
Shines on them ; and the written face abroad
Of nature, and Thy book of life itself
Is dead and profitless, until Thy Sun,
The living Spirit of Incarnate God,
Shines on them. Not alone be mine to read
What Matthew wrote or John by Thee inspired,
And Chrysostom and Austin taught of Thee ;
But oft, when rising up from these I take
My solitary walk, and muse alone
In the fresh morn without, in all may hear
Thy voices numberless, nay rather say
That still small Voice alone, wherein so oft
Thou speakest to the inner heart of man.

The thunder, and the whirlwind, and the fire—
These were but to arouse and humble man,
That he in awe might listen, when his God
Would speak unto his heart; the Judgments loud
That walk abroad, and with their iron tread
Shake kingdoms, or o'erthrow the hearth and home
In household visitations, whirlwind-voiced,
What are they? but the herald's warning cry,
The sterner preparations which precede
When Thou wouldst speak unto the heart alone;—
E'en as that herald trump which shall be heard
'Midst the loud last convulsions of the world,
Before that silence when that awful Voice
Most stilly, yet more loud than falling worlds,
Shall thrill the deep abysses of the soul,
That whisper which shall never pass away,
"Come unto Me, ye blessed!" Therefore meet
This very stillness of the autumnal day
I deem, to listen for the awful sound,
The stillness wherein God would speak to man.

"Harvest is past, the summer at an end,
And we not saved;" so the Prophet speaks
Who long'd to lodge in some vast wilderness,
And over Israel wept. Is it e'en so
Of that our summer which knows no return,
Once for all gone? The spring and summer-time
Of our short life on silver-plumèd wings
Have vanish'd; all their morning hopes that caught
The gladdening Eye of Heaven; the clouds that pass'd
And passing dropp'd in tears, yea, days that shook
And spake in thunder-voices to the soul,
And winds that came loaded with heavy thoughts
And ruffled us awhile; and gloomy days
That seem'd from us to shut the light of Heaven:—

The many mornings we have waked to sense,
To day-dreams sadder than our sleeping thoughts,—
The many days that lifted up themselves
That we might not discern the sound, nor hear
Beat on the earth their multitudinous feet
That bore us to the grave; eager desires
That buoy'd us and gave wings; affections, too,
Which had too much of earth, and therefore took
From what was due to Heaven; gleams of bright love
Which bathed our steps in sunshine for awhile,
Yet sped not on our journey;—tender ties
Of kindred which wove chains about our heart,
Part of itself, yet all the while by prayer
Not sanctified, nor link'd unto the Throne,
The hidden life with God;—then halcyon days,
And clear transparent streams, where serpents rose,
'Mid green tufts floating in their glassy deeps,
And pass'd in speckled beauty on the wave
In morning hours of spring: all, all are gone,
Afflictions too, and sore bereavements stern,
That seem'd to squeeze the heart all full of tears
Till it was dry, yea, very dry, nor had
One drop remaining, yet again at sight
Of pity flow'd anew all full of tears,
As if its stores were endless, or the Rock
Within it had been smitten with the rod,
And Christ, the Crucified, became within
A fountain of fresh pity never dry;—
But that, too, pass'd beneath the scorching sun
Of the unfeeling world. The summer then
Was on us, and alas! in the world's sun
The ripening of affections.

Greater aims
And large aspiring thoughts have been awhile

Like building up of stately palaces
Of goodly presence and commanding air,
And bright in sunshine, basking airy towers
Which hid their golden heads in the blue sky;
A fair assemblage, not of chambers meet
For pride or pleasure, but of holy shrines,
Towers to devotion sanctified; yet now
The tide of time, or like an ocean vast
The shoreless and unseen eternity,
With time its ebbing and returning tide,
Washes the base, and tries if all be built
Upon the Rock of Ages.

 All that's built
On Christ is built in lowliness, with self
Subdued and buried, so that when we fail
There may be something which can bear us up,
Above that infinite of after-death,
With omnipresent, everlasting power;
That neither death, nor life, nor height, nor depth,
Nor angels, and dominions of the Unseen,
Nor things that present are, nor things to come,
The soul may shake from her sure resting-place,
Or sever from the love of God in Christ.
Not what we leave behind of good report
Or goodly-seeming deeds, but what with us
We take to follow, this shall clothe the soul
With living spiritual wings, and bear her up
Unto the gate of Heaven, to greet the Morn
Of Resurrection, and return with Him
That brings the Day which sets not—when at last
The golden-crownèd Reaper shall descend,
Sitting on a white cloud, and in His hand
The sickle; and the angelic voice shall cry,
“Thrust in the sickle, for the earth is ripe

For harvest,"—and 'tis answer'd, "All is done."

E'en now He is descending on the earth,
And in descending pauses for a while
And gives to man the season and the space
For preparation and reflections meet.
It is the Autumn of the fleeting year,
It is the Autumn of declining age,
It is the Autumn of the fading world,
Which like the life of man throws fast behind
All that it once so prized and doated on.
Where are the mighty nations which have been ?
And where their cities ? sea-crown'd Tyre and Troy,
Carthage and Lacedæmon, either Thebes,
Wall'd Babylon, and ancient Nineveh,
And all the thousand cities which had thought
To live for ever ? Where their crownèd heights ?
Where their foundations ? O'er the silent wastes
Where not a stone remains, the Echo sighs,
"No more,"—oh, what a word is that "No more,"
Written on all that has been ! while the past
Eats up the present, preys on it, pursues
So swiftly, that the empires of the world
E'en in their very being are like clouds
Fast fleeting, while in fleeting they disclose
The everlasting kingdom of the Saints,
Amid the places of the gathering Dead.
Behold, the Reaper is descending seen,
And then the vision and the scene is changed,
He comes, and in His hand He bears the fan
To purge His floor, and gather in His barn ;
And then shall an angelic voice repeat
The Prophet's plaint and Nature's yearly cry ;—
"Ye had your summer—but 'tis ended now ;
The harvest of the earth is come and gone !"

"And we not saved?" Let this warning voice
Sound in our ears, and waken all within
That's capable of fear; for short must be
The time, whate'er it be, which oft from Heaven
God hath declared is short: then sweet, with sound
Like music's very self, the voice that speaks
Of interval between, of time yet given,
Of summer not yet gone, nor harvest past,
Though short indeed the time;—but not yet gone
Nor ended; sweet to know in this reprieve
The inexhausted goodness of our God.
"I hear, and ere they speak will answer them."
"Come unto Me, and I will give you rest;"
"Seek Me, and ye shall find." Then I will seek;
Unto Him will I come, to Him will speak;
And He shall answer me, and give me rest.
His Providence and Grace shall gird me round
And aid me, till e'en yet I find His peace;—
Shall aid me, though it be with seeming war;
Shall press me, though it be with Hand severe;
Making the world to me a stepdame stern,
Not mine own mother, or a mournful place
Of ruins, or a land possess'd of foes;
That when I ask of it for its sweet songs,
A grief may answer me; when I would pluck
Its flowers, a thorn may warn me back, to fear
And nothing find to lean upon. The fields
Of Autumn, and the falling leaves, and cold
And moaning winds that speak like tearful sighs,
May all the soul attune to sad regrets;
Till Winter's self shall come, and o'er these sights
Of desolation, with her covering pall
Gently let fall her virgin robe from Heaven,
Bringing on nature's grave her silvery veils,

And spangled plumes of white.

The ethereal space

The clouds are traversing ; upon the earth
Fleet mighty shadows, as if o'er our heads
Angelic wings were moving in the skies
On embassies of love ; and o'er the soul
Pass solemn sadnesses from the Unseen,
Disposing to reflection, and such thoughts
As may the heart make better, turning grief
To pensiveness of wisdom, not unmeet
For sights that are without which speak of love
That may that sorrow lighten.

What are these

Upon the wings of the departing year
So beautiful around us ? day by day
Decays that put on beauty, verdant slopes
Wherein all hues are mingling, yet distinct
In order'd fair gradations, rainbow tints
That seem to lay on earth amidst its tears
The promises of Heaven. What are these signs ?
Calm mornings as the mists have clear'd away
And ope the face of Heaven, fruits ere they fall
Hanging in beauteous fulness, spangled drops
That catch in radiant gems the smiles of Heaven ;
The creeping woodbines as by fairy hands
Led up on verdant branches, as if taught
To show their flowery bells on foreign stems,
And others matted o'er, a very cloud
Of hanging beauty on the hedges wild,
And all the glowing riches of the time
Gladdening the hearts of men :—what are these signs ?
What is their language ? 'tis, I fear, by man
Mislearn'd, misconstrued, misinterpreted ;
Such are but footsteps of the Almighty God

Walking abroad in goodness, and the light
That marks His presence as He passes by,
Like as when manifest to eyes of flesh
He went forth doing good and healing all ;
That sadness and disease and death itself
Stay'd not His Presence, but departing fled.
Yet what were these but tokens, that to Him
All men henceforth in faith might turn, nor rest
With outward signs and gifts of but a day,
But seek in Him the eternal Day of God,
Where no disease comes nigh ? for those His gifts
Were but for time ; disease and death that fled
Again return'd with mandate to destroy.
He gave the wondrous bread with His own hands
Creative, but in giving o'er them grieved,
" Seek Me not for the bread which hath sustain'd
Your dying bodies, but the better Bread
Which cometh down from Heaven, for He that feeds
Your dying bodies is the Bread of souls."
Seek not His gifts, but in His gifts seek Him,
The Giver, and the Gift Unspeakable,
That which is Bread indeed and very Life.

So Nature's outward tokens shed abroad
Should lead us from these gifts to pass in faith
To Him that promises, in nought to rest,
In nothing to rejoice, but in those things
Which He declares good for the immortal soul,
The things that make us meet on Him to wait,
In Him to serve Him and on Him to rest,
By Him to find Himself who is the Life.
O miserable thankfulness ! in these
The daily tokens of parental care
To overflow with gratitude, and yet
Forget the higher things which He would give,

And love of Him the Giver ; better 'twere
To mourn and in an aching void of heart,
Amid the bounties of the teeming year,
To feel a desolation all around,
An emptiness of all that satisfies,
Without the truer life which is in God.

There is no death like that which puts on life,
Or seeming life, which only lives to die,
Lives more the more abundantly to die
In signs of wealth or power, wherein the soul
Dies ne'er to live again—while Nature fades
I hear a better wisdom walk abroad,
In sympathies of solemn tenderness.

Our friends are dropping from us—or from sight
Are hidden or estranged, as we ourselves
Draw to the Unseen Land : 'tis so, O Lord,
Thou fain wouldst lead us to depend on Thee,
With us alone in dying—lead our thoughts
To Thee and those with Thee beyond the grave.

'Tis the Autumnal Hallowmas, and now
The season mindful of the sacred dead
Brings on our path the household of the Saints—
Gather'd into the garner safe from harm.
The Dead—the mighty Dead—how they around
From out their generations look on us,
As worms of yesterday, that creep and lift
Our heads unto the moon—and then depart !

Many the Saints whom we revere and love,
By intercourse of books in converse held,
The stars that beautify our nightly Heaven,
And then in silent watches seem brought near ;
But when we turn to Thee—and Thee behold,
And in beholding Thee adore and love
Thy Manhood full of Godhead, 'tis the Sun

Compared with whom the stars have disappear'd ;
For we have life and light within Thy beams,
And all things we behold on every side
Have life and light in Thee—in Thee the year
Wanes not, nor knows of an Autumnal shade ;
For in Thee there is Life, and Light, and Love.
Now is Thy kingdom come, but not to bring
The short-lived seasons and the changing moon
And self-returning year, its circles still
Inwreathing, but Thy Coming to prepare,
The Bride to wed with that great spousal ring
Which is eternity. The Sundays now
That bear us on with the declining year
In Name and purpose speak the Unchangeable,—
Creator, Saviour, sanctifying Guide,
Which was, which is, and which is yet to be,
The mystery of Godhead, Three in One.
And he that rightly hath received Thee
Hath in himself a living Trinity ;
In body, soul, and spirit fill'd with Thee,
And therefore fill'd with light ; Night become Day,
The world a new creation, wherein shines
The Lamb Himself, the everlasting Light.
And what are these our Sundays bearing on
Summer and Autumn—but the marble steps,
Steps of obedience in the Triune God,
Who is our Temple, building up in Him
In whom there are no seasons of decay
And no Autumnal signs ? Around us now
And in us—nearer than the air we breathe,
Is omnipresent power of endless Love ;
For God is Love ; and wheresoe'er we be
It is to breathe in Heaven that love to know,

To know it more and more. And thanks to Thee
In the revealing of Thyself below,
Who nothing hast required but faith in Thee,
That we may to Thy Godhead entrance find
And into all Thy love. At every step
Faith in Thy power, Thy goodness, and Thy truth
Was as the threefold cord around the soul,
By which Thou in Thy ways wouldst draw to Thee,—
E'en as a cord held out to drowning men
By which they o'er the billows pass secure.

What doth this lengthen'd Season teach but love,
Uniting in the bond of Three in One,
Since from his midday tower of Pentecost
Descends the Sun that rules our sacred year?
The Easter Morn is every week restored,
Our Sundays all one glowing Whitsuntide,
Like Sabbaths of one Jubilee, that pass
And yet are ever present; for 'tis now
One Easter Morn, one Sabbath all the year;
Which hath the hidden Manna stored with God,
Imparted unto each as worthy found.
His presence o'er His tabernacle dwells,
The sheltering Cloud becomes the pillar'd Flame,—
In the hot day a shade of dewy night,
In the dark night a gleam of genial day,—
While still the Church, a pilgrim Heavenly led,
From week to week her journey travels on,
From Pentecost to Advent, to our view
Unfolding some new mercies of our God,
Some manifold disclosures of His love
From out His written Word, which thus anew
From Sunday unto Sunday makes to bloom
The desert like a rose, and makes to rise

Rivers of water in the wilderness.
For such by meditation they become
Still week by week renew'd—each Sunday fresh
With its own lesson for the passing week,
Palm-trees and verdant springs :—no more we need
But that from well-spring of the heart within,
They should in word and action flow around,
And turn us more to prayer. In prayer to live
It needs that all without be desolate,
The soul itself feel poor and needing aid,
And comfortless, that it may earnest seek
The Comforter—nay, should with anxious fears
Be straiten'd, and as one in straits, herself
Gird up for the strait gate and narrow way,
And feel the harvest past, the summer gone,
And we not saved ; so perchance that fear
May save us, ere the summer hath gone by
And harvest come indeed. And why again
Doth nature thus around us and within,
Upon our body—friends—all cherish'd things—
Household and home-bred creatures—all we love
And value—set her signs of sure decay—
Upon the year—the day—on all we prize ?
Surely these are the unnumber'd tongues Divine
Calling to preparation :—lest we wake
Suddenly—on the gulf that yawns below
Worse than annihilation, at the sight
Grow dizzy in despair ; as one that comes
In some Norwegian pass upon a cliff,—
Nor fixing his firm eye on things above
To stablish and direct his tottering feet,—
Looks on a fathomless abyss below,
And gazing is bewilder'd and self-lost

Falls—oh, that we in better hopes may stand !

Therefore upon the landscape varied now
With lights and shades, serene and beautiful
As footsteps of retiring deity
In Homer's gods departing ;—therefore now
Upon the riches of the fading year,
And all the beauties of its going hence,
With swallows gathering round in the fresh morn
In council and debate, and still anon
Trying the wheeling of the joyous wing,
In prelude of their flight, with their adieu
Cheerful and blithe to summer hours gone by ;—
On scenes that once were summer, in their wane
All animate and beauteous, I will look,
And thence will gather faith in the Unseen
Not to despair ; and while the year yet waits,
Lest I despair at last, unto the last
Always to fear ; yea, from despair itself
To gain sweet hope, as in a dungeon dark
Men turn to faintest glimmering of the light,
Seen by degrees, and cherish it the more.
And what if breath of winter passes now
Upon the spring and summer of my days,—
Thence will I gain my hope ; when in the dark
I sit, the Lord Himself shall be my Light.

Wilt Thou not give me, Lord, far more than these ?
Wilt Thou not give Thyself ? Are these Thine all ?
For what else would I seek but Thee on earth,
And what in Heaven but Thee ? Alas ! so great
Thy goodness, so unwilling to deny
Whate'er the secret soul of Thee may ask,
The unexpress'd desire, the harbour'd thought,
Wishing to give the greater, yet the less

Not willing to withhold ; and to the prayer
Too weak in faith to pierce the distant skies,
Thou leanest down, to hear the feebler wish
Which hath too much of earth. And now, O Lord,
As retrospective to the past I turn
And summer suns that shined, Thy very gifts
Confound me, and bow down my face with shame ;
For well I know there is no ill on earth
But Thee to lose, no good but only Thee.

Wilt Thou not give me, Lord, far more than these ?
Thou that hast given me choicest things of earth,
Things that an early fancy dared to wish,
Too wedded to the world—Thou that from High
Letst Thyself down to my poor low desires,
And listenedst to my whisper'd cravings mean ;
Children and friends, and honour, and a home,
And sacred ease, and books both new and old,
And thoughts that from the well-spring of the heart
Flow forth in learned leisure,—wilt Thou not
Bestow far more than these things ? Ah, alas !
That I should such have prized, content with these,
E'en o'er Thy mercies could I sigh and mourn ;—
“ My Father, Thou hast given me Southern lands,
Wilt Thou not give me also water springs,”
That o'er Thy very mercies I may weep ?

I cannot grieve unless Thou give me tears :
My life is as the valley of dead bones,
Which cannot of themselves, unless Thou call,
Which cannot of themselves arise and live,
Unless on the dead bones Thy Spirit breathe
And clothe with flesh and sinews of new life,
New life—lest I should die the second death,
New life in the New Man, ere yet my feet

Be slipperiness and darkness, and the mists
Of age mine eyelids close to things of Heaven,
Unnerve my hands, enfeeble my stiff knees,
And the inner darkness compass me around,
Which knows no morning, has no morning star.

“Knock, and it shall be open’d.” O blest words!
To Thee I knock in prayer that Thou mine eyes
Wilt open, that I may behold my sin,
And in beholding mourn, still mourn until
The winter of my sorrow brings a spring
Of Resurrection; welcome, wintry rain,
And cold, to my dry heart, welcome awhile,
That I in desolation may work on,
Till haply gradual change e’en yet may come.
Behold the trees, they are as winter dead,
Naked and leafless; look again awhile,
And they are all of verdant summer full,
Embowering many branches,—many leaves;
And so within the soul a little while
And there may be a change. O blessed change,
More blessed when unknown! O healthful need,
Which hungers after righteousness, and pines,
And feeling its own want is fill’d the more;—
The want of an undying, exiled soul
For its own home—its rest—its food—its life
Which is in God; which wakes to know itself
Feeding on husks, and weeps—weeps to behold
Its own forgetfulness that could so long
Have laugh’d and play’d, and with such empty things
Been satisfied, and gloried; on itself
Gazing in kingly robes upon the stage
Within the glass of vanity, nor knew
Itself a beggar poor, a captive mean.

But Thou wilt "bring me to the wilderness,
And there wilt speak of comfort to my soul ;
Till Achor's valley be the door of hope,
And she may sing as in the days of youth."

Lo, all things now around me speak of rest,
The Christian's heritage, rest amid scenes
Of sadness and decay, a rest in God—
Sweet prelibation of eternal peace.
Therefore not childhood only, and new youth,
But old age and decay, declining day,
And Autumn in it hath of power divine,
Cognate unto a Christian's better life,
The peace which passeth knowledge ; as a ship
That on a tranquil eve, as storms have ceased,
Drops its worn sail, and glides unto the shore
In some calm shelter'd bay, and hides itself
From winds and waves that harass'd it so long,
In haven and in quiet anchorage.
Such scenes disposing to eternal peace
Woo all my thoughts abroad, which I to God
Would consecrate, and listen, till the heart,
By their deep influences soothed and still'd,
Rightly interpret to the eye and ear
The parable of the Autumnal Eve.

So may I walk awhile, if it be given,
In fear, while it may be "nor clear nor dark,"
If only "in the evening it be light."

Then daily with my children may I read
Morn after morn Thy Gospel, and from thence
Bedew my wither'd spirit with fresh dews
Of the Everlasting Morning which attends
Thy doings ; from Thy healing hands gain hope,
Fear from Thy sacred lips ; and so may I

With little ones around on Wisdom tend
Instructing Childhood and of Childhood taught,
That their sweet innocence may Conscience wake,
Slumbering o'er the remembrance of the past,
To trim her lamp and knock at Mercy's door
That opens:—so may I at evening time
Gain light, and watch with hope the lengthening
shades.

THE END.

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